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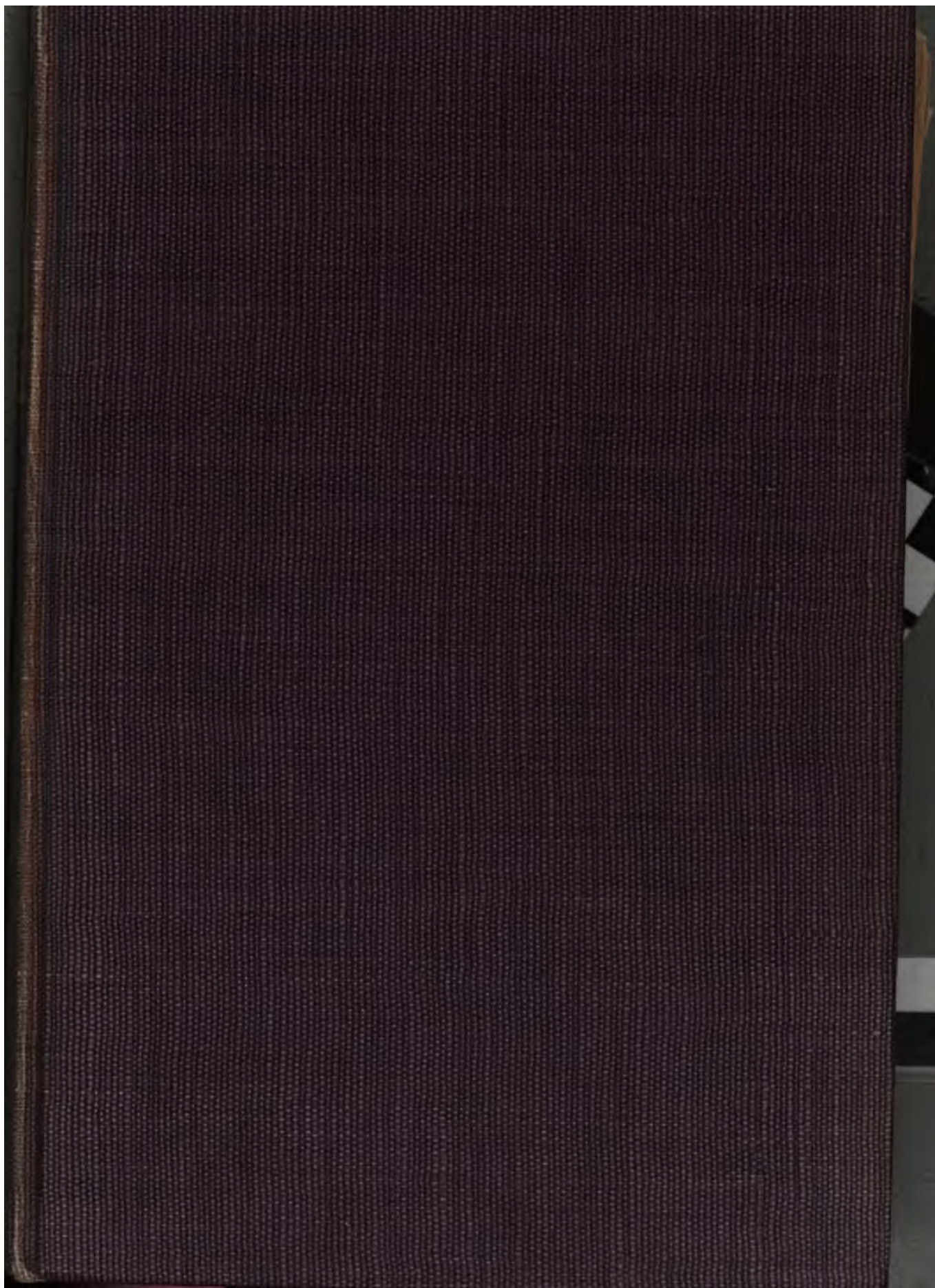
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*DRAMAS AND TRAGEDIES OF
CHIVALRIC FRANCE*

JOURNAL AND MEMOIRS
OF THE
MARQUIS D'ARGENSON

VOLUME ONE

MARIE ANTOINETTE EDITION

*Limited to Six Hundred Numbered
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ROMANCES OF ROYALTY

JOURNAL AND MEMOIRS
OF THE
MARQUIS D'ARGENSON

PUBLISHED FROM THE AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS IN
THE LIBRARY OF THE LOUVRE BY
E. J. B. RATHERY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE

TRANSLATED BY
KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

AND
WITH A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE BY THE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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IN TWO VOLUMES

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INTRODUCTION.

By C-A. SAINTE-BEUVE.

THE Marquis d'Argenson is by good right one of the most esteemed names among those of the politicians and men of the eighteenth century who concerned themselves with matters of public interest. He wrote much, and the papers that we have of him are many; among other works he has left a book of "Considerations on the Government of France," which was long circulated in manuscript before it was put into print. Voltaire, who had knowledge of it as early as 1739, called it "a work of Aristides," and Rousseau, who used it later as an authority in his "Social Contract," said: "I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of occasionally quoting this manuscript, although it is not known to the public, to do honour to the memory of an illustrious and respected man, who retained even in the ministry the heart of a true citizen with sound and upright views for the government of his country."

M. d'Argenson was not yet minister when he wrote that work, and he had left the ministry before he revised it and put the last touches to it. During his ministry of rather more than two years in the Foreign office (November, 1744, to January, 1747) he met with a piece of good fortune that he did not seek. Being present at the victory of Fontenoy, he wrote an account of it to Voltaire, a former college friend of his, who at that time held the title and function of Historiographer of France. This letter, published by Voltaire, has become historical, and does great honour in the

eyes of posterity to the mind and to the humanity of M. d'Argenson. "You have written to me, Monseigneur," replies Voltaire, "a letter such as Mme. de Sévigné might have written had she been in the midst of a battle." That praise was deserved; we have a description, gay, vivid, emotional, of the combat, the danger, the success, more than uncertain at one moment, and the sudden and complete victory. The principal honour is paid to the king; then, after all that a courtier in heart and mind could say, we read these words of a citizen philosopher, or, to say it more simply, a man:—

"After that—to tell you the evil as well as the good—I noticed a habit too quickly acquired of seeing tranquilly on a battle-field the naked dead, dying enemies, smoking wounds. I observed our young heroes well. I thought them too indifferent on this score. . . . Triumph is the finest thing in this world; the shouts of *Vive le roi!* the hats in the air at the point of the bayonets; the congratulations of the master to his warriors; the visit to the intrenchments, the villages, the redoubts, all intact; the joy, the glory, the tenderness—but, the ground-work of all that is human blood, human flesh in fragments.

"At the close of the triumph the king honoured me with a conversation on the peace. I despatched the couriers."

Such words, at such a moment, are enough to honour forever a name in history. M. d'Argenson is in politics of the school of Catinat and Vauban, and a worthy predecessor of Turgot. Those of his writings which have been published since his death have only confirmed this idea; the "Considerations on the Government of France," which appeared in 1764 in a very faulty edition (a new edition, called a better one, appearing in 1784), justifies in the eyes of the public the eulogies of Rousseau and Voltaire, and show

M. d'Argenson as the enlightened and prudent partisan of reform within the bosom of the monarchy and by the monarchy, reform without revolution. "Essays" by him, in the style of those of Montaigne, which were printed in 1785 (retouched, it is true, by his son. M. de Paulmy) will make him known on his more varied and literary side.

Thanks are always due to those who bring to us fresh lights and information on any part of history; they are due even to those who do so reluctantly and complainingly; but how much more to those who do it with grace and a single eye to the public, and through zeal for the truth. M. Rathery, who for many years has applied himself to serious and historical literature, and has given proof, in much critical work, of a rare spirit of exactitude and discrimination, has lately done true service by publishing, in the name of the "Société de l'Histoire de France" the Journals and Memoirs of the Marquis d'Argenson. This means the true Journal belonging to the Library of the Louvre, which offers us a series of facts and reflections such as they pressed and hurtled beneath the pen of this upright and singular personage, from the ministry of the Duc de Bourbon throughout the whole duration of that of Cardinal de Fleury, and beyond it. It is not without difficulty and some effort that this publication now sees the light, and triumphs over many obstacles which might have arrested it.

There are books more pleasing than this Journal of d'Argenson, there are none more instructive for whoso knows how to read well. It is the first time that we meet with private and political memoirs on this period of the eighteenth century, for which we have had until now no other searching chronicle than the wholly parliamentary and bourgeois Journal of the lawyer Barbier. The author of the present Journal, very well placed to see and to know, is scarcely an

author; he does not think at all of making a book, but only of satisfying himself, of relieving his mind, and rendering account to his own soul of the present state of things, and of the special circumstance that besets him; in short, to give daylight to his views, his hopes, his humours. It is impossible that, proceeding in this way and with such bluntness, he should fail to open gaps through which we are able to see clearly into things and men. An eminent man, regrettable in so many ways, M. de Tocqueville, wishing to study the old régime and reach the heart of it during the two centuries that preceded the French Revolution, said: "To do this, I have read not only the celebrated books which the eighteenth century produced, I have studied many works less known and less deserving of being so, but which, nevertheless, being composed with little art, betrayed even better the true instincts of the period." D'Argenson's journal is one of the works that M. de Tocqueville must have searched; art is as absent as could be desired; *instinct* breathes through it.

When we take the Marquis d'Argenson at his source, such as he is now given to us, we must make our moan about him in the first place, and pass upon his language. Never was there a writer so alien to Vaugelas and all good usage. Now that lexicons are made of all authors and all provinces, a very curious one might be made of d'Argenson's *patois*. But this very man, with his bristling, savage style, has sudden expressions which leap from his heart and paint a person or define some profound political truth at a stroke. For instance, speaking of the English colonies of North America, predicting their future emancipation and separation from the mother-State, and prophesying with anticipating enthusiasm the gigantic grandeur of the new United States so soon as they could work for themselves

and not for others, "What superiority," he exclaims, "over all the other colonies of mercenaries, selfish governors, ill-disciplined soldiers, lagging recruits, slow orders, little force, little zeal, because *those must draw their soul from afar.*" Could that be better seen, or better said?

It has been said that d'Argenson had "no style of his own;" what think you? He is not a writer, that is true; but his manner of speaking and saying things (provided he is allowed his way and his toilet is not made) has character and originality. It is not the style of an academician nor of an essentially polished man, it is rather that of a bourgeois of the time of Aubray in the "Satyre Ménippée," or, if one likes it better, of a country gentleman of good race, fed on books, expressing himself crudely, plainly, and with sap. He recalls the tone of the fathers and grandfathers of Mirabeau. He has no elevation, certainly none that is continued; he allows himself at all moments trivialities of expression which make what he says the opposite of noble and dignified language; certainly, in this respect he was not fitted to be a minister of Foreign Affairs. But he often has flashes of admirable meaning; even, at times, happy images. Speaking of a man of narrow and false mind, who despised on principle the gentleness and kindness of truly great men, "He admires nothing in iron," he says, "except the rust." Wishing to call and fix attention on the miseries of the poor people in the country, which we feel in the provinces and forget in Paris and Versailles, he said these admirable words, which deserve to be written in letters of gold: "We need firm souls and tender hearts to persevere in pity when the object is absent."

Made a counsellor of parliament at twenty-one years of age, d'Argenson was intendant [civil governor] of Hainaut and Cambrésis at twenty-six, and served his apprenticeship

to political life and administration in that province. It has lately been remarked, and those who have done so appear to have discovered with a surprise that seems to me excessive, that there was in the old régime, from the seventeenth century, and especially since Richelieu, a system very similar to what was later to be that of the government, new and reconstituted, after the Revolution. In fact, there existed, under that old régime, re-formed later by the hand of a master, a modern organization, already very strong, ascending directly to the king, to the council of the king, receiving its orders and impulsion thence, developing its method, extending its net-work over the whole kingdom by means of the intendants; but it must be added immediately that, with and in spite of this united and vigorous organization which performed its functions regularly from the time of Louis XIV., there were, at all moments, points of hindrance and stoppage, claims thwarting it, exemptions, privileges — nobiliary, ecclesiastical, parliamentary, municipal privileges of all kinds; inclosures of land and islets abstracted from the public rights; relics of powers and institutions belonging, for the most part, to the earlier feudal system which, though lessened and reduced from time to time, had never been formally abolished. This was precisely what the France of the Revolution, the France of '89, had to pull down, disengaging and completing the sound and living parts of the old régime, pouring into them the spirit of equality, the spirit of good sense and of common rights as opposed to the monarchical principle of divine right; and this is what France did in the Constituent Assembly with grandeur and some inexperience, and what, warned and matured, she re-did later under the Consulate with precision and perfection, beneath the eye of Genius, but by the help of modern men who had issued from the old régime.

D'Argenson, dead then for so many years, was fitted to have been of these men; fitted by mind, by instinct, the most precocious of instincts; that is his principal title to honour to-day. It is interesting to form to one's self an idea, from the number of significant facts that he reports, of d'Argenson the intendant in the days of the regency. He has new and sensible views on a quantity of matters of public utility; he writes memorials upon them to the ministers, hoping to get them approved; and he resolutely applies them. He tells us of various means and inventions of which he bethinks himself when difficulties in his administrations present themselves. He had fertility of ideas; he was a man of expedients, and sometimes of execution. Son of a father who was thought to have points of resemblance to the great cardinal, Richelieu, he had some remains of him; I say remains, for one does not really know whether in him they are the remains or the beginnings of the great minister, because obscurities, vagaries, oddities of mould or singularities of temper, soon came to complicate the way and clog the machinery; the gold within him never freed itself from the scoræ. Young, and in his intendancies, he appears before us to advantage; he might be a practical statesman developing and forming himself for a greater career. A good citizen, inspired with a true passion for the public good and with a sort of tenderness for the poor people, having bowels of compassion for the sufferings of the peasantry, he was, nevertheless, a man of authority; a vigorous prefect was d'Argenson the intendant. When the municipalities did not walk straight he brought them to heel, and harshly too.

One of the maxims of his policy was that while the sense of ownership should be increased in the landed proprietors, public office should never be regarded as property by the officer invested with it. He sometimes went too far, however,

and from being too zealous for equity he shocked the customs and habits of his region. He was never afraid of being right to excess; management of men, *tact*, was not his distinguishing quality. He recognized his mistake; and believed he was corrected by experience; but was he? He tells of a valuable intendant, but a man harsh and violent, who became impracticable; he judges him as if with an eye towards himself; adding, however: "If I were prime-minister, I should like to have thirty intendants of that mould; I could do good work with such disinterested and active agents."

He often uses, writing, as he does, for himself alone, that form of phrase, that agreeable supposition, which seems quite natural to him: "If I were prime-minister" — he aspired to that office, and more than once he believed himself on the point of attaining it. He was a man, in spite of his honest acknowledgment of early blunders, to undertake to do good despotically, without regard to the manners and customs of others. He belonged to the school of royalty, democratic as he was; and, if I may employ a modern term, d'Argenson, taken at his source, was a royalist more socialist than liberal. Such at least he seems to me in his youth, and in the earlier part of his Memoirs. I am seeking less to criticise him than to define him.

René-Louis, Marquis d'Argenson, was the eldest son of Marc-René, the celebrated lieutenant-general of police during the last eighteen years of Louis XIV., and Keeper of the Seals under the regency. He was born in October, 1694. His father, who had the genius of administration and the qualities of a true statesman, misunderstood the somewhat reserved merits of his elder son, and much preferred the younger, who was more prepossessing and more amiable. This younger son was the Comte d'Argenson, long minister of war under Louis XV., much in favour throughout his

whole career, much liked by men-of-letters, whose retreat at Ormes after his dismissal gave rise to a curious description by Marmontel.

D'Argenson the elder brother was at first treated by the world as he had been by his father, and it nick-named him d'Argenson *le bête* [the stupid] to distinguish him from his brother, the witty man; he was only serious, reflective, and more concerned to be than to appear, whereas his brother turned wholly to succeeding and pleasing. He trained himself in a great measure, if we may judge by the glimpse he gives us of his early education. When at some college solemnity, at which his parents and strangers were present, he saw his former friends and women of his acquaintance, he sitting on a wooden bench in his scholar's cap and gown, he blushed with mortification and did his best on holidays to recover his position; he became, as much as he could, a man of the world, but he could never be, like his brother, a man of social distinction, and he did not aim to be.

Serious at heart, having tastes of his own which soon became very pronounced, loving study of all sorts, history, engravings, and the instruction they afford on the manners and morals of a past time, judging soundly the men and things he had before his eyes, and solicitous for the amelioration of the species in the future, he was at all times very natural, at the risk of not seeming essentially refined nor very lofty. He had in him a principle of integrity and a sense of justice which he cultivated and strengthened constantly, far from endeavouring to smother it. Let us not ask him for an ideal which was not in him,—neither the true ideal which ennobles the human condition and seeks to give it all the beauty of which it is thought susceptible at certain moments; nor that false ideal which, attaching itself to appearances only, is caught by illusions that are only

decorative. He has too good a mind and is too sincere for humbug or brilliant illusions; he is not by nature lofty enough to conceive of great art in anything, nor yet of true beauty. An honest man, he has, in certain ways, the manners and morals of his time. It is not what he does at a given moment that surprises me; but what passes my comprehension somewhat is that he ever dreamed at times of writing it down and consigning it to his manuscript volumes of observation and remarks.

It is thus that on himself, on his own race, on the good qualities and the defects of his family, his brother, his wife (let that pass), his daughter, his son, the greater or less sensibility of the latter, his want of imagination, his limits of mind and talent, and "the contraction of his spirit," he says and writes all that he observes, all that he thinks or conjectures, though sure to be read by some of those concerned and especially by that very son, after his own death. The question of paternal delicacy does not seem to have occurred to him. He is so fond of observing, pen in hand, that he has even left a picturesque description of a valet of his, and a detailed and rather ugly sketch of two of his secretaries.

Entering life, on the eve of the regency, M. d'Argenson, serious as he was, or was to be, did not pass through it without acquiring something of its morals and its tone. He had, at twenty-three years of age, an intrigue with a young lady of the same age, a cousin of Mme. de Prie, who was the first to embolden him. He carried very little of the ideal into this intimacy, or amorous intrigue, which does not deserve the name of passion and lasted but one year. While speaking with propriety of the lady, who became a widow after their rupture and then remarried, he adds, in ending his remarks: "I wish her a long life and happiness; as for me, I have at present better than she in every way."

The years of application and labour were now to begin for him. He was from the first, as I have said, a counsellor to parliament; in 1720 he entered the Council of State and was sent to Lille to train himself for the intendency with his father-in-law, M. Méliand — for they had married him early without consulting him; and this sulky marriage resulted, after some years, in a separation. He was appointed intendant of Hainaut and Cambrésis in 1721. There he busied himself at once in efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people and the well-being of the troops. On arriving at Valenciennes, he says, he found almost a mutiny in the garrisons on account of the excessive dearness of everything, the after effect of Law's system. To ward it off, he wished to give bread to the garrisons, but the ovens were broken and the commissaries bent on robbery. He was therefore the first to propose and to put into execution the issue of grain to the troops, which the soldiers themselves were to have ground and made into bread.

During the time that d'Argenson was intendant in Hainaut, Law crossed that province to escape into foreign lands. D'Argenson had him arrested and held at Valenciennes until he received orders from the Court. It was then that Law said to him, in a long conversation which they held together: "Monsieur, never could I have believed what I have now seen during my administration of the finances. Let me tell you that this kingdom of France is governed by thirty intendants. You have neither parliaments, nor committees, nor assemblies, nor governors. I might almost add neither king nor ministers. It is on thirty masters of petitions, clerks in the provinces, that the welfare or misery of those provinces, their plenty or their sterility, depends."

Another time, in his father's salon, d'Argenson had heard

Law say of France, comparing it with England: "Happy the land where in twenty-four hours a matter is deliberated, resolved, and executed; in England we take twenty-four years!" Such was France already, after leaving the hands of Louis XIV.; the enterprising Scotchman praised us there for a quality which has often proved our defect, and for a habit of celerity and vigour which is our peril, but has also, many a time, made the French action a prodigy.

After quitting his intendency, d'Argenson began to feel a species of ennui. Becoming once more a simple councillor of State, this business of judge in which, as he said, "one has but one suffrage for the thirtieth part of a decree," seemed to him a poor compensation for his little vice-royalty in Hainaut. Little by little, however, he came to be distinguished by the Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin, and by the prime-minister, Cardinal de Fleury. He endeavoured in his own way to make himself useful. He applied his mind continually to find new and just administrative measures, and always with a view to good; this was a trait of his character. This is not saying that he neglected his fortunes at Court or the care of advancing them. On the contrary, he aspired to advancement in his own way and by means which he thought the best and most solid. He wrote memorials on the different matters then under discussion, notably on the strife in parliament so vehemently excited by the ecclesiastical affair of the Constitution [bull *Unigenitus*]. When at the Council of State some new difficulty arose the king was occasionally heard to say, "Is there no memorial by M. d'Argenson about this?" He had views, inventions, expedients without trickery, which allowed for regulations and esprit de corps; he applied his projects with wide and judicious knowledge, to which he added daily by assiduous reading. He thus diverted his mind as best he could, writ-

ing down his ideas on all subjects daily, and being actively employed on political considerations in the little society of the "Entresol," of which he was an active member; hoping the while that through the friendship of M. Chauvelin, who had taken a liking to him, he would shortly become a minister.

The Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin, had taken d'Argenson into great esteem and friendship; he wanted to serve him as a father, he said, and to make his political fortune. He appreciated his qualities as a worker, a man of merit, and fertility of mind; but he felt his defects and spared no pains to correct them. He told him incessantly, while praising his industry and his ardour to be useful and "a certain firmness of heart and mind in which he sympathized," that he absolutely must be drawn from the species of obscurity in which he lived, for he was well known neither to others nor to himself. D'Argenson answered reminding him of how much he lacked; that he was shy and timid in meeting people; that he was badly brought-up in one way, namely: that his father, by preferring for a long time his younger brother and misunderstanding him until the last two years of his life, had discouraged him, and led him to shut himself up within himself, and this had made him torpid in entering society; that he was dull at amusements and cards, and did not know how to lose his money, etc. To all of which the Keeper of the Seals continually told him to "hold himself ready for all things," and meanwhile to go more boldly into society than he did.

M. Chauvelin is an important political personage who has never been completely freed in history from the shadow of Cardinal de Fleury; and we owe it to d'Argenson that we now know him well. It is true that d'Argenson often varies in his views of him; writing from day to day, his judgments

and his degrees of esteem are at the mercy of his present impressions. The interests of his ambition curiously affect the quality and sensitiveness of his barometer. His own hopes, according as they rise and fall, made him see in glowing or in ugly colours certain persons who seemed favourable to him or the reverse. When he hopes to succeed through some one in reaching the ministry, that some one (be it even Bachelier, Louis XV.'s valet) takes instantly to his eyes the colour of a good citizen; we are all so, more or less, if we do not take care. At times he has flashes of anger, and butts against Fleury, who does not employ him, who will not depart from the ministry or from life, against that gentle old man so obstinate in living, in lasting, and whose longevity is the wildest of tricks and foils the ambitions that are waiting. In his broad and often elevated views of foreign policy, d'Argenson is indignant that France is lowering herself, that the navy is more and more dilapidated, that nothing is done to recover and hold her rank with honour in the maritime or continental struggles which are preparing. The bourgeois policy of Cardinal de Fleury, to which he adhered during the preceding year, hoping to bear a part in it, he now rejects and casts away.

At first he counted fully on being placed in office by Chauvelin, who had constantly sounded and pumped him (exploited him, as we should now say) for ideas; even luring him, perhaps; but certainly endeavouring to polish him, supple him, draw him out of theories, and no doubt despairing in the end of doing so. Appointed by him ambassador to Portugal (where he never went), d'Argenson flattered himself he should succeed Chauvelin and obtain a portfolio which was one of his spoils, that of Foreign Affairs. "I did not solicit it," he says; "others solicited for me. . . . I am worth little, but I burn with ardour for the welfare of my fellow-citizens,

and if that were well known, certainly they would wish me in office."

About this time, and through the months and years that follow, we see him successively on the point, or in view, of becoming chief-president of parliament, secretary of State for war, chancellor of France (if the chancellor, then sixty-nine years old, should die), controller-general, or even superintendent of finances, *duc à brevet*, and prime-minister at last — for he has all these aims and points them out as they come along. To realize these fine dreams he counts as a last resource on the faithful Bachelier, valet to the king and introducer of Mme. de Mailly, the first mistress; this alcove and antechamber affair seems to him, for a quarter of an hour (as long as he hopes for advancement from it), patriotic and honourable. Letting Bachelier support his interests he calls being "passively" in the intrigue. Thus, like a wolf roaming round the sheepcote he reconnoitres the ministry on all sides by his conjectures; he will make a place for himself, no matter what; and in the moments when he hopes least he believes himself sufficiently important and dangerous for the cabals to endeavour to get rid of him. "They will try to send me off on embassies; I expect that," he says.

This Journal, the monument of a personality wholly in the rough, naïve and glowing with honesty in his own eyes, this singular and clamorous soliloquy of an unconsciously ambitious man who exalts and extols himself *in petto*, of a virtuous man who is on thorns of a desire for power, awaiting it from hour to hour, that he may make, whether they will or no, the happiness of men, is curious for the moralist, and not less instructive for the historian. The original being appears in his fulness; the personage can there be judged to the bottom. D'Argenson says somewhere, with

that favourite supposition of his future position : " If I were prime-minister, I would certainly establish an Academy of politics, in the style of that of M. de Torcy." And that is precisely the thing for which he was best fitted, namely : to establish an Academy of the moral and political sciences, to make a " Society of the Entresol " on a large scale and a first floor ; and read there, in company with men of learning and merit, copious and instructive memorials, with numerous and well-furnished views, thick-coming and eager projects, of which others than himself would judge later what to take and what to leave, what was practicable and what was not. Such, definitely, was his true vocation. The minister (if he became such later) would always be complicated in him with the academician and the theorist. Above all things he was a rummager of ideas and a seeker for them.

Towards 1725 there was formed in Paris at the house of the Abbé Alary of the French Academy, a political conference, which was held every Saturday, and as the abbé lived in an entresol of the Place Vendôme the society took the name of " The Entresol." A valuable paper by d'Argenson has been printed (but not as correctly as it should have been, for why change the phrases without necessity ?) which enters into the closest details of what he calls " that agreeable society." He was there in his element, with the degree of seriousness and unrestraint that suited him ; if none but politicians like himself, sedate and prudent, more Dutch than French, had formed that society, it might have lasted long without giving umbrage. But things were otherwise ; social relations mingled in it ; it became a retailer and *judger* of the events of the day. " And truly," he says, " we censured sometimes to our heart's content." The Abbé de Pomponne, a witty man but a feather-weight, went about repeating everywhere the opinions he had just heard, retailing with

an air of mystery the good conversations behind closed doors. The Entresol was accordingly requested one fine day to be more circumspect, and under the tranquil ministry of Fleury this advice given in a low voice was equivalent to prohibition.

After the closing of the Entresol, d'Argenson still held to the idea of renewing it, and of holding elsewhere with a few friends, parliamentarians chiefly, conferences on public right [*droit public*] and matters political; this was his dominant taste. He thought himself bound to speak of the revival of the Society to M. Chauvelin, who replied with some heat that "he did not wish it; that it was beneath him, d'Argenson, who could find enough to instruct him in his own study; and that all those whom he named to him were fanatics and bad royalists." It is plain from this that Chauvelin, who wished all sorts of good to d'Argenson and desired to train him for government, was endeavouring to make him as mundane as possible, and also to provide against his tendency to turn politics into discussion and argument; he wished, in short, to keep him from becoming an Abbé de Saint-Pierre.

In the first volume of his Journal d'Argenson seems more ambitious than we find him when we judge of his career as a whole; and he also shows himself less kindly, more brutal, and more disagreeable by nature than we imagined him from his writings hitherto published; which are all more or less rearranged and designedly patched. That said, it is right to insist on his good sides; on the strong and lofty parts of his political intelligence. He has thoughts and observations of the best alloy, which do honour to the French nation of his time and of all times. In a talk one day with M. Chauvelin, July, 1734, the minister explains to him how he has been forced to make war by the low opinion

the enemy had taken of the present government. And it is remarkable, said Chauvelin, that Frenchmen themselves have propagated that unfavourable opinion. The French have voluntarily given themselves away to foreigners, and even more willingly than to their compatriots; "the cavilling spirit which rules in good society has led our Frenchmen to say a thousand evil things of the weakness of the nation, the insurmountable carelessness of the ministry in making war, the desperate state, as they pretend, of our finances, the effeminacy of our younger men," — in a word, the decadence of France; and it is not extraordinary that foreigners should have reported in their own country these impressions given in the best company of Paris, and should spread the idea that they could brave us with impunity and need no longer reckon with us. But what happens? — this is d'Argenson's remark as he replies to the minister, — these little men, puny apparently, and supposed to be enervated by luxury, verified instantly what Voltaire said of the French courtiers in the *Henriade*: —

"Peace has not enfeebled their natural valour;
From the shades of repose they are rushing to danger."

He concludes that on this virile fibre of the nation a true statesman ought to rely to give to policy its elastic energy; and he desires that the war may go forward at once. D'Argenson was not for a bourgeois policy on that occasion.

Another day (and this relates to one of his favourite ideas) he deplores seeing the occasion lost to drive the emperors of Germany forever out of Italy. He thinks it might have been done at the Peace of 1735 after the success of our arms. "We could have done it, assuredly," he says, "and had all Europe with us if, acting with candour, we had strengthened the third party with the spoils of the house

of Austria in Italy, without in any way clothing the Bourbons with them." Disinterestedness for ourselves would have given us the right to speak loudly and firmly. The death of the last grand-duke (1737), who left no children, opened the way, as d'Argenson thought, to new facilities. He had written upon this subject a first, and then a second memorial, in which he proposed a "plan of division" and declared for the establishment of an "Italian equilibrium," the first condition of which was the expulsion of the Austrians. He aspired to see the imperial power concentrated in Germany, and the prayer of Julius II., "Chase the Barbarians from Italy," fulfilled. He often devoted himself to projects of reconstruction in this direction, but he did not succeed in realizing them during his passage through the ministry of Foreign Affairs. His views and his intentions on this point, as on many others, should be counted to him to-day. In the great number of ideas and projects of amelioration which he agitated, Time has done its winnowing, and some there are which, by a singular turn of the wheel of Fortune, seem to have become expedient.

That which, to my eyes, forms a great part of the interest of d'Argenson's writings, and which ought to render them precious to all who love truth, is that they are wholly the product of the moment itself. He writes each day what he knows, what he feels; he writes it not with any view to a present or posthumous public, but, at most, for his posterity, his children, and, above all, for himself, for himself alone in night-cap and dressing-gown. Dignity may find something to say against this; curiosity profits.

He destined himself, as I have said, to the ministry. There were delays. In 1736 he had almost the certainty of being appointed ambassador to Portugal. There was a question of opening a great commerce between that nation and

France, and of combating the influence and the interests of England. D'Argenson had long desired to know precisely the direction of his employment, that he might make himself worthy of it by thorough study and labour. He belonged to the class of upright natures who do not like to treat or reason of things unless they know them to the bottom. He prepared himself conscientiously for his embassy, and was soon the best and most capable man, so far as reading goes, whom they could have sent to Lisbon. The dismissal of M. Chauvelin, which happened unexpectedly (February, 1737) was for d'Argenson a grievous mishap; taking part in this disgrace as a loyal friend, he nevertheless thought he saw a means of advancement. The Seals and the Foreign Affairs were both vacated. The Seals were restored to Chancellor d'Aguesseau, and d'Argenson believed that the Foreign Affairs would come to him almost of themselves. His friends already congratulated him. But suddenly M. Amelot, intendant of finances, appeared, a man so little fitted for Foreign Affairs that he had never even read the "Gazette," as he owned to d'Argenson; a man, too, who stammered and had no elocution. But he was the follower and ally of M. de Maurepas. He was chosen, and d'Argenson did not succeed him until seven years later. The dismissal of M. Chauvelin weakened the ministry of Cardinal de Fleury and left free course to evil influences. "He had his defects," wrote d'Argenson some years later (1748), "but more greatness and integrity than all the ministers of to-day put together." He lost in him a good guide and a useful counsellor. He continued to study and to wait.

This position of minister in expectation was prolonged, but M. d'Argenson accommodated himself to it very well; every one about him felt that he must attain some office

sooner or later. "My good intentions," he said, "and the serious meditations I have made on State matters are beginning to be known to the world; and this, joined to my retired life which gives me rarity, makes me pass for a man singular in goodness, so that many persons who know me only in imagination cry me up and advance me."

When he examines himself face to face, and endeavours to define his character to himself, d'Argenson paints his portrait to us, but not so well as when he compares and contrasts himself with his brother, the courtier and future minister. He should be seen under this comparison, in which he takes pleasure, for it casts a distinct light on two figures we are apt to confound. I give no preference to the more virtuous brother over the other as minister. In fact, I think the Marquis d'Argenson was only moderately suited to be a minister, whereas the Comte d'Argenson held office very worthily and with sufficient glory for a number of years, having undoubtedly some superior qualities and brilliant parts. The only historical truth which I desire to show here is that the two brothers belong to two races of political men, wholly different and even antagonistic; one being of those who go to the bottom of things and aspire to a real and constant end; the other to those who proceed in all things by expedients, and are inspired solely by circumstance. The elder brother has explained this separation of views and inspirations in some very fine pages, which need, however, to be slightly cleared and corrected.

The Marquis d'Argenson was never very seriously ambitious. He loved reflection, study, the true for the sake of truth, good for the sake of good; he had a sentiment of justice, integrity, and sincerity that nothing altered, and he expresses it in terms of incomparable sensibility.

"I am well accustomed," he says, "to that species of ordi-

nary ingratitude which is the forgetting of benefits, and consists only in not returning good for good.

"But to that which returns evil for good I can never grow accustomed, however much I have experienced it. My life is a tissue of it; I will not say that I have loaded certain men with benefits, but I have done them gratuitous services; I have acquired some friends by so doing, but I never counted on it; I have counted only on those with whom sympathy and heart have bound me, not benefits; and from these it is amazing what ill-offices I have often received.

"This comes to me as always fresh; my heart is wrung by it; I am overwhelmed when I think of it; it threatens my life; injustice revolts me and agitates me; my voice trembles in speaking of it, and when I think of it I would that I had never been born."

He wrote this some months before entering the ministry; what would he have said when he left it? We see here the defect in the cuirass; to live and resist in such surroundings he had not the metal.

I leave details, which would have no interest except in a biography. Cardinal de Fleury, after the dismissal of M. Chauvelin was not as well disposed to M. d'Argenson, and he even became his enemy. He spoke of him openly one day with ill-humour, ending by these words: "In short, to say the whole thing, he is a worthy friend of Voltaire, and Voltaire is a worthy friend of his." In February, 1741, M. d'Argenson succeeded his brother in the office of chancellor to the Duc d'Orléans, and three years later, in 1744, Cardinal de Fleury being dead, the king appointed him councillor in the Royal Council, on condition that he quitted the business of the Duc d'Orléans, it not being proper to serve two masters. Finally, in November, 1744, he was made minister of

Foreign Affairs, his brother being already in the ministry of War. The history of this ministry, which lasted till February, 1747, is that of France during that period. M. d'Argenson has left the richest and best arranged elements for whoever desires to treat of this part of the eighteenth century.¹ For me, who am seeking in him only the man himself, with his mental and moral qualities, and the philosophical writer, I shall confine myself to remarking that he failed in this active career. He wished for peace, a peace which, to his mind, would have been more advantageous to France than the one subsequently signed at Aix-la-Chapelle; he believed that it could have been obtained by means of a great defensive war at all points. He had plans for political reconstitution in foreign countries, especially Italy; he wanted to form "a republic or eternal association of the Italian powers, just as there is in Germany, a Batavia, an Helvetia, for this is the greatest affair that has been treated of in Europe for a long time." It all failed. He was dismissed purely and simply, without pension, but without exile. They had finally brought the king to think him "incapable of all public affairs" (for a Utopian as we now should term it. The Duc de Richelieu called him "the secretary of State of the Republic of Plato").

All careers were henceforth closed to him. The depths of his heart are revealed to us on this occasion, in a sort of involuntary effusion which will be found in the middle of his "Remarks in reading," and to which he has given the

¹ These papers are all preserved in the Library of the Louvre; the following are the most important of them: *Essais dans le goût de ceux de Montaigne*; *Loisirs d'un Ministre d'État*; *Pensées sur la réformation de l'État*; *Jusqu'où la démocratie peut être admise dans le gouvernement monarchique*; *Matériaux pour l'Histoire des choses arrivées de mon temps*; *Mémoires de mon Ministère de 1744 à 1747*; *Pensées depuis ma sortie du Ministère*; *Remarques en lisant, depuis Mai 1742 jusqu'à Decembre 1756*.

rather singular title: "Of Providence."—"How delightful is the idea of Providence!" he suddenly exclaims; "how sweet its hopes and its consolations are to the unfortunate! But its decrees are impenetrable!" And he starts from that to describe the spectacle that presents itself before him when he writes, in 1748, one year after leaving the ministry. Everywhere, to his eyes, is successful iniquity, apparent triumphs of the unjust over the innocent. But it would not be just, in our turn, to take quite literally, and in all the excitement of its secret outburst, the irritation of this honourable man. I shall confine myself to saying with him: "If one has no intrigue at Court, it is easy to know what will happen there; all that one does of good is little felt, or else attributed to others; and the slightest fault which a man may, perhaps, commit becomes a crime for which he is exposed." And, in another place, finding in his son, M. de Paulmy, then ambassador to Switzerland, some of the qualities of caution, insinuation, and shrewdness which he had not, he says, with a certain self-examination and sense of the contrast: "He praises . . . he approves, he knows how to reduce his ideas, and diminish them when need be; a man is very fortunate to have that suppleness; to succeed, one must please; *men are more difficult to deal with than affairs.*"

The first shock over, he became once more, and easily, on the morrow of his leaving the ministry, what he had been previously,—a studious man, a great reader, reading with delight, making his study his kingdom and his world, and ever full of thoughts and observations on books and on things. In reading what he then wrote for himself alone, the collection of which we have in manuscript from 1742 to 1756, I am struck with a frequent and sustained remark, namely: a complaint, that returns again and again beneath his pen until 1750, of the spirit of satire and malice which

destroys everything, of the absence of *heart* and of a love of Good apparent everywhere. The vivid and precise manner in which he describes to us this vice, such as he sees it, takes from his complaint all air of commonplace. Never did I better understand what was the malady of the eighteenth century, especially the first half of it, than in reading these manuscripts of the Marquis d'Argenson.

"The heart," he says, "is a faculty, of which we deprive ourselves daily for want of exercise, whereas the mind becomes keener day by day. We court intellect, we cultivate it, we are becoming wholly mental. It is mind *joined to heart* that makes heroism, courage, whatever is sublime, and from which results genius. For want of affection and the heart-faculty this kingdom will perish; I predict it. We no longer have friends, we no longer love our mistress; how, then, shall we love our country?"

He says it and resays it, like a good citizen whom it alarms, like a man who suffers from it in a deep-felt, touching manner; he discerns an element of death through that intellect that scintillates, beneath that social politeness, malignant and frigid. In society, in letters, from Fontenelle, La Motte, Marivaux, Duclos, Maupertuis, down to Voltaire himself; from the Richelieus, d'Ayens, Duras, Maurepas, to M. de Choiseul, *finesse* [subtlety, artificiality] was the order of the day, the style of the times, especially caustic *finesse*, continual epigram, irony — that bugbear of the simple and the good, that mortal enemy of the grand. "Politeness seemed to repress all external violence that inward baseness might thrive the better."

In all this he makes me comprehend a part of the success of Gresset's comedy "*Le Méchant*," to-day so little understood, but which in 1747 revealed to the eyes of all the reigning vice, *malignancy from vanity*, and also that other

success, far more fruitful and durable, of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, bringing to that century precisely what it lacked, — a flood of true sentiment. We can follow in d'Argenson the disease that preceded this coming of Rousseau; the flippancy in fashion, the false affectation of sensibility on the part of those who lacked it utterly. "We see nothing," says d'Argenson energetically, "but people whose hearts are dull as pigs, for this century is given over to paralysis of the heart; nevertheless, you will hear it said that it is fine to be sensitive to friendship, to virtue, to sorrow; they play at feeling as if they felt it." The great merit of Rousseau was to feel truly that which he expressed with force, and sometimes with emphasis; for by him men passed abruptly from that "paralysis of the heart" to a sort of sudden aneurism and impetuous swelling of it. It was at least life in place of nothingness.

D'Argenson gives me in his daily comments a keen sense of the corruption of the middle of that century; that cold corruption without resource, whereas there was resource in the ardent and newer corruption of the second half. When the generation which had come through the regency was fifty years old, what was it? We have its picture, not flattered, in d'Argenson.

The Marquis d'Argenson was a happy man in the nine or ten last years of his life, after leaving the ministry. He died in January, 1757. He lived sometimes in Paris, sometimes in the country, at Segrès, near Arpajon, where he had hired a very pleasant house. He found that a country-house without a domain was more delightful than a château in the midst of an estate, because he was free from the cares of management and could give himself wholly to his studies and his books. In his plans for a happy life, which he diversified with not a little imagination, many and various things

entered. He received the world of Paris, d'Alembert, La Condamine, Condillac, etc., at his country-house. Voltaire was there in the spring of 1750. He loved long conversations, consecutive, serious — though enlivened with good and merry wit; he loved them, not to shine, nor for effect, but to communicate ideas, and possess a true commerce of mind; that is how we extend our horizons. "Whoso does not listen, or listens ill," thought he, "narrows his mind more than the man who never reads. I call it good listening and good reading to do both without bias toward the speaker or writer." That he himself read thus his "Remarks in reading" prove. He did not bring all things into relation with himself; he enjoyed his intellect in all directions by forgetting himself. "Cæsar said that he was never less alone than when alone. He was right; and I go farther; we are never less occupied with ourselves than when we are alone; and never so occupied and hampered by self as when in society."

Thus, at liberty with his own thought and with that of others, he gave himself a free rein. He read all sorts of books, ancient and novel; it was the food he needed. "Young people," he said, "should get it into their heads that the more they read, the more mind they will have. He who has read will also have more mind if he reads more." He read all the new books and noted down the impression he received of them; he was not one of those *disdainers* (as he called them) who declare at a glance that a book is worth nothing. He read to the end every book he began — biographies, collections, anecdotes, even *anas*, even fairy-tales; he took them by their good side, and nearly always found some subject for reflection, or pleasure. "I tell our usual friends: 'How I pity you for being always critical! When will you begin to enjoy anything?'" But what he preferred to all else were books on politics, considerations on the public good and

on social matters, "things of consistent meaning and genius," by which he meant what the author produced with vigour of his own thought. Books translated from the English interested him particularly. Apropos of the "Discourses on Tacitus" by Thomas Gordon, he exclaims: "With what delight one reads the strong and forcibly expressed arguments of the English when one loves politics, as I have done this long time!"

He asks himself why books translated from the English have such attraction for him; he sees plainly what they lack in order, in method, and how much "things have declined from rules." French writers seem to him superior; he feels the need of explaining to himself this effect, so real, on serious minds. "It is," he says, "that they reason with such force, and that they never say trite things, as our authors do, even when they reason like Englishmen. La Bruyère alone discovers and thinks with freshness. What characterizes English writers, and that whole nation, so examining, so reflecting, is their great good sense in all things."

This does not make him unjust to Frenchmen, however, nor blind to the faults of our neighbours; and he puts energetic correctives to the good sense with which he credits them: "They are philosophical and covetous savages; even their depth in philosophy is a passion; gentleness and politeness, which the French have by nature, is wanting in them, and this renders them inferior to us in making good principles pass into action."

Speaking of the novel of "Tom Jones" which every one was reading just then and which he enjoyed greatly, "Who could have told us eighty years ago," he says, "that the English would write novels that surpassed ours? Yes, that nation goes far, because it has liberty in all things. We emulate it, and we shall attain it; our minds are seeking to show they

are free; and it is known that after imitating we perfect, and then surpass."

D'Argenson is a philosopher, but a philosopher in his own way, as it is well he should be, not letting himself be influenced by any school or cabal. His religious beliefs reduced themselves, pretty nearly, to a belief in Providence; but he held it, he insisted upon it; and he found much to blame in those who did without it. He seems otherwise to have contented himself with the distribution of good and evil, which, in spite of appearances is made, according to him, sooner or later in this world. He wishes to see and does see happiness within our reach here below: "Having well weighed everything, I find that man is born here principally for his own happiness. Working for it, understanding it properly, he serves his neighbour as much as he ought; not doing injury is a good deal; take away the evil and the good remains." This system of happiness which might lead easily to selfishness is quickened in him by an active nature and a kindness which extends to all about him. He believes that the unhappiness of man comes from anxiety, and the eternal pursuit of something else, instead of enjoying what he has. "Men," he says, "are always *in via*, never *in mansione*." He attributes this restlessness to example, to imitation, to causes that are foreign to the nature of man. "It is a bad and very extraordinary habit," he thinks, "of which we could be corrected by the progress of universal reason, as we have already been cured of superstition and a quantity of barbarous habits and ways of thinking." For himself he is happy and content to live; it seems to him that he is present at a fine spectacle, a charming dream; if at times the spectator has a desire to be an actor it is a mistake; he is hissed (he knows something of that) and he repents. Let us keep to our own place! D'Argenson is the opposite

of Pascal, Byron, Prometheus, and all who torture themselves. Not that he is wholly without flashes of desire for grandeur and immortality, as when he says:—

“It is true that we feel within us a gigantic soul, far too great for our body. Every one must say of himself, ‘But that is not the soul of this body’—especially when we are fasting and are moderate in meals. [D’Argenson always mixes matter and the senses with his reflections.]

“This compound of will, exaltation, conception, imagination, invention, genius, disdain of so many things, contempt, passions, etc., all that, I say, composes a soul too strong for our place and times. One might call it a divinity shut up in a mouse-trap. This, no doubt, is what has given such prominence to Religion, all the more because it flatters one’s self-love to find one’s soul so large a morsel. The dignity we attribute to it, the great esteem it wins, the personage it plays, the return it gains in the other world for the damage it receives in this, are all encouragements to belief. These reflections have an air of illusion if you choose, but let us agree that the appearances are strong; there is something hidden beneath this disproportion, real and felt as it is; we have the air of dethroned and imprisoned kings.”

He seems not to be aware that in this he speaks like Pascal; the tone is rare in him. His habitual ideal is far below this order of thought.

Just as he sometimes had these flashes of desire for spiritual immortality, he felt also, though rarely, the spur of human glory. With a sincere man who tells all, one can go very far in making an analysis of him. This analysis, however, will here take from him the only brilliant aspect under which he has figured; he does not even keep intact his honours of Fontenoy; but let him speak for himself:

"Hardly have I thought, for a few moments in my life, of my personal fame; yet I have never failed to feel how it implores in the heart and in the senses. I was ignorant of what it was that I felt, but that voice made itself heard on all occasions; I felt a gnawing worm when a suspicion of shame occurred to me, and I could not be consoled if I had nothing of good with which to answer that suspicion. I have taken too little care of this; occupying myself too much with the bulk of my objects, which are always virtuous. In this way it happened that I was not in the dangers of the battle of Fontenoy, and that I arrived only in time to witness the victory; for I had gone to the camp, three leagues from the battle, the evening before to work at my despatches, which I had not attended to for three days. Thousands of other things have distracted me in the same way at Court."

In ceasing to be a statesman and possible minister, d'Argenson turned, more and more, to ideas of social reform and pure philanthropy. He was not ill-disposed to Louis XV.; he had augured better of that prince in his youth, and had believed for a moment that he would make a good king; at the time that Mme. de Mailly was the favourite mistress (December, 1738) it seemed to him that she had only a limited influence, that the king would not yield to her much, "and that, like Henri IV., he loved the affairs of his State more than those of his mistress. Louis XV.," he adds, "through laziness and too much apathy, will never work much for his State, but what he does will be good, shrewd, and profound." This favourable augury, justified perhaps by the good judgment of the king, was balked later by his abandonment and extinction of will, in which lay his great vice. D'Argenson has written some strong pages upon Cromwell, in which, while recognizing his qualities,

he sets himself to blast his hypocrisy, his machiavelianism, and cannot bring himself to even allow the services that he rendered to his country. "Men," he says, "are under no obligation to him; no man has ever hated humanity and gratuitous virtue more than he." Among such pages as these, which are very fine and deserve to be read as they are, he drops at times into judgments of mere good-nature. He shows himself as very favourable to the great Frederick; not only does he admire his writings, but he even admires the apology for his policy. "What a man! what a great man!" he exclaims, "and with it all he is a philosopher and loves humanity." He takes, without objection, the Philosopher of Sans Souci for what he gives himself out to be.

The judgments and testimonies of d'Argenson on the writers whom he had known and the books he had read are more trustworthy, and of much value to my eyes. On Voltaire, for example, he is more to be listened to than any other. Voltaire was his comrade in college; he enjoyed him keenly and admired him; when a minister, he did everything to employ him, to bring him before the world and give him value. Voltaire's correspondence with him is full of warmth and interest, and respectful intimacy. To be just, one ought to gather together the numerous articles by d'Argenson in which there is mention of Voltaire, for they complete and correct one another. He makes to himself no illusion on the eminent man whom he admires; he qualifies distinctly his faults of character and conduct, and he even uses on this subject words so bald at times that one does not like to echo them at this distance.

D'Argenson knew and read Montesquieu. What did he think of him? Very nearly what M. de Tracy thinks of him in the present day. There is in Montesquieu a side of art to which d'Argenson was little sensitive; on the other

hand, he was much shocked by the rash and too general conjectures, the incomplete arguments, which never go to a conclusion; he did not sufficiently consider the historical element, which Montesquieu respected at every turn and brought into relief with such brilliancy—which led d'Argenson to say, after a second reading of the “Considerations on the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans”:—

“September, 1754. Read for the second time. Famous work of this famous author. He began with the ‘Lettres Persanes’; he advanced from that book, and crowned his work by the ‘Esprit des Lois.’ The chapters are very unequal. Some are of great superiority. This author is a man of strong imagination, and his judgment comes only in consequence of his mind. Therefore, we find great steps forward in politics, but some that are retrograde and must not be followed. His expression forms a large part of his genius. *Magna sonaturus, parva facturus; nobilis fama, illustris cantator vis (or rei) politicae.*”

I am not quite sure that I understand him; but it seems to me that he makes Montesquieu a virtuoso in politics.

He himself meditated a great work, of which we have the materials; the title was to be: “The Laws of Society in their Natural Order.” He blames the moderns for knowing only “practical politics,” and for not having even an idea of “philosophical politics”; that science, he says, which has for its principal object to subordinate men to one another, to civilize them and render them happy. The only master whom he knew in that political science was the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, whom he admires without reserve, except as to form, and whose only misfortune, to his mind, was in not being pleasantly eloquent: “What terms fantastically placed! what minutiae fill his mind on the road to the grand, making him ridiculous! and ridicule disgusts our

charming country with good." But he declares that "his projects are *all* good. At first sight we reject them, but, on going to their depths, we find there is *not one* that is not safe and founded on the only true principles." Such is—to offer it without disguise—the veritable thought of the Marquis d'Argenson. He bore within him the whole of '89, and something beyond it.

If I could quote a greater number of his judgments I would give them, not as true, but as his, and on that account almost always remarkable. He said of Montaigne:—

"Montaigne is better if only quoted; we find fewer graces in him if read consecutively. His passages are more pleasing than his treatises; and his grace is above his authority. More profound than sublime, he is the best moral philosopher that we have in France."

He says of the Maréchal de Saxe, under the head of "Genius, Mind":—

"One has never so fully recognized the effects of mind and of genius as in the case of Maréchal de Saxe; he had not the mind for war, but he had the genius of it; he debated little, he debated ill; but he seized the good and the great; feeble in reasons, strong in conviction. Such are great artists, usually bad workers under masters. Genius is much nearer to instinct than to mind; nevertheless, it is far above mind."

He has his favourite authors. To some he grants too much, to others too little. His literary judgments, properly speaking, are not always very delicate. Mme. de Sévigné is judged severely and with some disdain, which she shares with her sex. He contrasts her with Saint-Evrémond and La Rochefoucauld, "who had a force of genius which made them say great things amid their antitheses; whereas,"

he adds, "women only *chiffonnent*, and their levity degenerates into frivolity, no matter how much judgment, intelligence, and good taste they may have." He has read her letters once with some pleasure; but had "promised himself not to read her again."

As for Saint-Evrémond, he has better things to say, having very particular reasons for liking him.

"He is my favourite author. He is a philosopher of good company. They say he writes in a rather *précieux* style; but his antitheses express great things — like Balzac; *magna sonaturus*. What variety! what lofty and excellent objects filled that brain until extreme old age! Happy man! great man! And with it all, the senses served him well; he has enjoyed the highest delights of life and of humanity."

Beside Saint-Evrémond in his taste and his esteem he does, nevertheless, place a woman, Mme. de Staal-Delaunay, whose Memoirs, then just published (1755), delighted him. "She writes better than Mme. de Sévigné," he says; "less imagination, more wisdom, more sentiment, more truth." If we reflect upon it, we shall find that all these judgments harmonize and hold together; they are those of the one man.

What pleases me in these manuscript "Remarks in Reading"¹ (which would allow of a very agreeable volume that would charm the reader if selected with judgment and discretion) is their natural frankness, and also the manner in which they are said. D'Argenson dares to be himself without fear of ridicule, and to speak as he likes, without any

¹ These "Remarks in reading," (*Remarques en lisant*) are still unpublished manuscripts in the Library of the Louvre. The quotations given in this Introduction will not be found in the text of the "Journal and Memoirs." — Tr.

of that "petty circumspection" which in France, he says, "tops the heads off all our personages." As for his style, he defines it himself when he remarks that he likes an "entering style, as wine-merchants call an *entering wine* that which makes itself drunk of itself." Noble or not, I accept his image. His style makes itself read, and has flavour. He says, for instance, in a lively manner which communicates itself:—

"I have sought to know why I love 'Don Quixote' and to re-read him a score of times in my life, as I have done several other novels; it is that I love the manners and morals there depicted. I live with the good people in reading them; being novels of manners and customs, the authors paint the manners and customs of their time, and not those of the days when heroes lived. Mlle. de Scudéry, in 'Cyrus,' paints the manners and the ideas of the hôtels de Longueville and de Rambouillet. I like those times much; I would like to have lived in them; I like alcoves and balustrades; I collect the drawings of Berain and Mellan. In 'Don Quixote' I find the Spanish manners and morals of the good old times, of the reasonable days of Spain. In comedies I like pictures of manners, just as in drawings or engravings I like the fashion of things. It is not art, nor the difficulty surmounted that I seek and admire. My mind has little curiosity about other minds, but my imagination loves images, and happiness flows from them to me through the senses."

I cannot omit to say a word about the book called "Considerations on the Government of France," which is always cited in speaking of the Marquis d'Argenson. The work does honour to him, inasmuch as it presents the moderate and practical side of his political opinions. The true title and idea of the work was: "How far Democracy can be admitted into Monarchical Government." D'Argenson con-

ceived the idea of his work in opposition to that of M. de Boulainvilliers, which was wholly in favour of feudality and the *noblesse*. D'Argenson, who was more an adversary of the *noblesse*, though his own nobility was good, did not enter into the laments he heard around him. "These gentlemen," he said, "who complain of their rank not being sufficiently supplied with the gifts of fortune, are nothing but poor pond pike who have not enough carp to eat; no, none are to be pitied but those who lack necessities."

D'Argenson loved both royalty and the people; he wanted the good of the public, without, for all that, being a republican. "Republics have no head; monarchies will soon have no arms, for the head enervates them. What are we to do?" he asks himself. He thought that the abuses and evils of the old régime came because it failed to exact that France should be raised "not from beneath her kings, God forbid! but from beneath an odious aristocracy — not an aristocracy of nobles who think nobly, but a satrapy of officials of all kinds,¹ who have put all things into forms, bad regulations, mischievous principles, and ruin." He therefore thought that "to govern better, it was necessary to govern less," and to organize the monarchy itself by the help of an enlightened democracy, well divided, not dangerous; that is to say, by a county and municipal system. He forms a detailed plan for this; attempting in a way to incite to a second establishment of *communes*, as the direct benefit of royalty. This book would not be unworthy of publication, if placed in a collection of the principal original publicists of the eighteenth century. In that case, recourse must be had to the

¹ "Satrapie de roture;" *roture* means ordinarily persons of plebeian wealth; but used by d'Argenson in this connection, it applies to the vast body of office-holders (nobles and others) who, from Louis XIV.'s time down, fattened on the country. — Tr.

manuscript of the Louvre, for as to the two editions of 1764 and 1784, the first is riddled with blunders that destroy the meaning; and the second has undergone the arbitrary corrections and softenings of his relative.

Eighteen months before his death, d'Argenson, who died at sixty-two years of age and was still full of health and vigour, expected a long old age; he foretold it indirectly in a portrait entitled, *Tastes of an Old Philosopher*, written in June or July, 1755. It is the last aspect under which we see this original man, who has written so much and made so many confidences about himself and his times; who presents to us in his person such a mixture of the virtuous, the heartfelt, the sensible, the singular, the naïve, and even the coarse, and who is so well fitted to call for the study and the explanation of more than one moralist. The matter is rich, the mine is deep; I have done no more than reconnoitre it and sound it in a few places.

I wished, before ending my inquiries, to see the portraits of the Marquis d'Argenson and his brother which are in the Cabinet of Engravings. The face of the elder is sad, rather stern, reflective, the lips tighter than I should have expected; the idea of the kindness which he really had does not appear. The face of his brother, who resembles him in the nose and chin, is, on the contrary, smiling, agreeable, and the lips are kind.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The "Journal et Mémoires du Marquis d'Argenson" was first published by his great-grand-nephew, the Marquis René d'Argenson, in 1825. In 1855 Sainte-Beuve, studying the original manuscript of the d'Argenson papers preserved in the Library of the Louvre, discovered that the edition of 1825 had been altered, and even garbled, apparently to suit the wishes of the family. In writing his articles on d'Argenson for the "Causeries du Lundi" he stated this fact and proved it. On which the Marquis René d'Argenson re-published his edition [Paris. Jannet. 1857-1858]. This, of course, produced a controversy which has no longer any interest for the reader.

Meantime the "Société de l'Histoire de France" had taken up the matter, and, with permission and approval of the Director of the Library, had employed M. E. J. B. Rathery to prepare a correct edition from the autograph manuscripts preserved in the Louvre. This edition was published by the "Société de l'Histoire de France" in 1859, and from it the present translation has been abridged.

The title "Journal and Memoirs" gives a rather incorrect idea of the work. It is not a journal, neither is it a memoir in the usual English meaning of the word, namely: a record of the events of a life. It is a collection of Notes and Memoranda, written down occasionally in connection with the events of the date given, but more frequently as the reflections of a man in his study on the men and topics

that filled his mind. They were not, it should be remembered, prepared for publication by the writer; he left them as he wrote them; jotted down as the thoughts came to him, without any effort to give them form. This being so, there is, naturally, much repetition and much that is of little interest at the present day. The following translation, though abridged, presents all, or nearly all that readers, unless they are historical students, would care for.

These notes and reflections give an invaluable picture, not elsewhere to be found, of the dull corruption, political and social, of the first forty years of that sixty years' reign — the wonder is that Louis XV. was allowed to reign so long and that Louis XVI. ever came to the throne. These notes are the thoughts of an *honest man*, closely connected with the government, seeing that corruption clearly and prophesying a coming revolution; not in the violent form in which it came, but "the crumbling of the nation at its foundations, and falling, so to speak, in pieces." As to the man himself, nothing can be added to Sainte-Beuve's admirable analysis of him.

JOURNAL AND MEMOIRS
OF
THE MARQUIS D'ARGENSON.

I.

1694—1732.

If what I write is destined to be read by my posterity I am not sorry that it should know the beginnings of my father's fortune.

He was born in Venice, and had the republic for god-mother, and the Prince de Soubise, who was then travelling in Italy, for godfather. I have an original letter from Balzac in which he prophesies a great career for "the little Venetian."¹ Certainly there was not much appearance of it when my grandfather retired to his estates, and even after he had paid his debts. He made my father an allowance of five hundred *livres* annually for his maintenance and for all expenses. Sometimes my father came to Paris with his money, and put what he intended for his stay there on a *bassette* card; and when it was lost, he returned the next day.

My father was for some years deputy to the attorney-general; but he had to give it up or support himself in

¹ His father, the writer's grandfather, René de Voyer d'Argenson, was ambassador to Venice at the time. He ruined himself during that embassy, and withdrew to his estates in 1628, when thirty-two years of age. — Fz. Ed.

Paris, and he quitted that line. He returned to Touraine to find something to do. He wanted to serve in the army ; they boggled about it ; he grew too old (though still young) to make a beginning. There was question of his marrying Mlle. de Paulmy, afterwards Comtesse de La Rivière ; he might in that way have had the Paulmy estates, but she was not yet the heiress of them, her brother being alive ; he did not die till after the marriage of his sister with M. de La Rivière. In this marriage my father feared the education of a young lady brought up at Court near Madame la Duchesse ; this was serious ; besides which, the mother, the Comtesse d'Usès, was a cruel creature, who died at a great age, in litigation against her whole family. In short, my father had no liking for the family.

He found resources on the maternal side ; my grandmother was an heiress of the old magistracy of Angoumois. Her father, M. Houlier, still lived and was lieutenant-general of the bailiwick of Angoulême. My grandmother had as much as four hundred thousand *livres* in marriage, a great *dot* in those days. My grandfather squandered part of it ; his wife signed pledges for him ; but there still remained funds which were not touched. M. Houlier proposed to resign his office to my father ; it shocked a man like my father to be lieutenant-general of a bailiwick, though it was one of the finest jurisdictions in the kingdom ; but he had passed the age for the army, and the place offered him a subsistence and an occupation.

Though he was not really an ambitious man, the devil had pricked him without his knowing it ; he went naturally along the path to action without thinking to act ; when a taste for trifles lessens in such minds, they begin to weary of all that is not the direct road to fortune. The means he took were to make himself very capable and to

practise at hard work. He had what is called the working spirit. I have proofs of his labour: remarks on his reading; dissertations on great and political topics; historical excerpts; studies on public and individual law. I have volumes of such work. Of what good could all that be to a poor country gentleman, or a mere provincial judge? But the office was a magistracy. If it was not pointing his nose to the fortune his inclinations promised him, it was certainly not turning his back upon it.

In other ways he was a lively fellow, of good health, given to all pleasures without intemperance or obscenity; the best society in the province sought him; he drank much without being the worse for it; had relations with all the women he could, snub nose or aquiline, fat or thin; secular or in convents (with rather more liking for the latter); said many a witty thing at table, and was thought the best company in the world. His was a vigorous mind, a courageous mind, with a heart almost as courageous; extreme accuracy, with wide extent; he did not know himself all that he had of genius and eminence; and towards the end of his life he had taken a habit of restricting and undervaluing both.

However, here he was at Angoulême, more abundantly and honourably provided for than he could have expected. M. Houlier died. He had a house in the town and one in the country, which my grandmother lent him. It is called "La Poyade," on the banks of the Charente; they say it is a charming place; his office gave him a respectable income. He lived only tolerably well with some of his neighbours; silly provincials who sucked their pride. My father took cavalier manners with them; he hurried over forms in order to get at once at essentials and the grandeur of the law; he reconciled lawsuits; he spared judge's fees; he did all

the good he could do to the human species. That is enough to excite base souls and mercenary against their superior, making pretext of rules, that is to say, forms, and claiming the rights of their offices. They complained, among other things, that my father brought a big dog, a good deal like mine now dead, named Calot, into the court-room by the collar.

This was the beginning of my father's fortune; a rise that he certainly owed only to himself, to his labour, and to his talent for government; merits which were employed as soon as they were known by great persons. In 1691 or 1692, they sent into the provinces a "king's commission for the reforming of legal abuses in the provinces." One of the commissioners was my future uncle, M. de Caumartin. When the commission came to Angoulême the members were struck with the merits of the lieutenant-general; he seemed to them very eminent in public affairs and the first of men in his capacity as a man of good company; they recognized his virtues and his courage. M. de Caumartin piqued himself on his genealogical knowledge; he knew that our birth was one of the most ancient in France, the first in Touraine, so that my ancestors were almost always found commanding at the head of the warrior *noblesse* of Touraine, concerned in our ancient alliances, and employed at Court and on embassies, etc.

So M. de Caumartin was captivated by my father. He was an ally and favourite of M. de Pontchartrain and entrusted with the chief affairs of finance. He urged my father to go to Paris; all the other commissioners joined him; there was but one voice; sincere offers of services. My father refused the temptation; he did not see daylight on account of his want of fortune, and he hated chimerae. Nevertheless, at the end of a few months he was obliged to go to Paris, and there they kept him. The occasion of his

going was a suit against him by his company, on which he wanted a ruling by the council. I had occasion in an affair for which I was commissioner in 1725 to see this ruling which served as precedent for a like affair; it turned very much to my father's advantage. M. de Caumartin brought about a great intercourse and friendship between my father and M. de Pontchartrain, at that time controller-general and afterwards chancellor of France. He used to say to people: "Do you know what that M. d'Argenson is? He is a man who will get to everything in the end, and ought to be made administrator of Languedoc now."

This opinion, justly formed and taken to the king soon bore fruit. They began by giving him certain lucrative but very laborious commissions; that of reforming the admiral-ties, the regulations of the navy, the council of prizes. In all these affairs of the navy he made himself so capable in a short time that M. de Pontchartrain (the one-eyed one), being promised the survivance of his father as secretary of State, was sent to my father to be instructed. After this my father was given the commission of attorney-general for the investigation of *franc-fiefs* and sinking-funds; there he did incredible labour and recovered many millions for the king, obtaining for himself respect and praise for his justice from those he investigated. A reasonable salary was attached to this commission, so that, being now able to subsist in Paris, he resigned his office in Angoulême. M. de Caumartin wished him to marry my mother, and M. de Pontchartrain facilitated the means. They told my mother that hunger and thirst were marrying; she had but thirty thousand crowns; her courage inspired her with hope; she believed that my father's merit would carry him farther than all her brothers-in-law who, in the end, were only too happy to have him for patron.

My father was thirty-nine years old when he began to be thus employed in Paris. He was ugly, with an intelligent countenance, and was very well made; my mother wanted him, such as he was. But it was now a question of getting a position; he wished for that of master of petitions; he did not know how to set about it, and the marriage took place without his being well assured on that point. However, the lucky star so willed that the office of master of petitions became extremely cheap about this time. A M. Ferné lent my father the necessary money, without interest, for the purchase. This M. Ferné was receiver of taxes at Angoulême and had a great passion for my father. He was willing to risk his property to help him with all he needed. Afterwards my father made M. Ferné's fortune, and put him in all the business he could; he is a man of great property now, and he and his children have always been much attached to us. My father also picked up some means on collateral sides. His uncle, the Abbé d'Argenson, gave him his property, charging his pension upon it. His other uncle, the Vicomte d'Argenson, in view of his marriage, gave him or secured to him, among other things, the house in Paris, Vieille rue du Temple, where my father went to live in 1696. Also, there came to him little by little, some property from the maternal side, with which he made his purchases of land about Argenson. With all this my father established himself, took wife and office. Shortly after, it was a question of giving him the intendency of Metz, but, just then, they preferred to put him in charge of the police of Paris, M. de La Reynie having retired. It is well known how he acquitted himself of that duty; I refer, as to that, to the eulogy made upon him by M. de Fontenelle before the Academy of Sciences in 1722.

In that office my father was virtually a minister, for he worked directly with the king and was in constant com-

munication with the great monarch. It was a question a dozen times of raising him to the ministry; the intrigues at Court, the league of the ministers excluded him, always on the same pretext, namely: there was no one to replace him in the police of Paris in times so difficult as during the late war. He was believed to be strongly in favour of the Jesuits; a mistaken opinion. As he knew them and their designs he did not esteem them, and did but little for them; that Order are not fond of those who work for them only half-way. My father also stood only moderately well with Mme. de Maintenon; she esteemed him, but there was little connection between them; he was attached by rectitude to the master; all the ministers feared him; the courtiers excluded him the more because he showed he could do without them.

[1709.] At the close of the year 1709 I was sent to school with my brother; we were then such big fellows, that is to say, so advanced in life, that without being born rakes we had become so; for we imitate, from age to age, the period just above us; little boys tread on the heels of youth, just as youths advanced for their years counterfeit men of importance. My mother was kind, indulgent, and had some taste; our way of living did not deter her from letting us follow our own habits. I frequented theatres, assemblies, women; I made acquaintances, I went to taverns and other places when I was with men in society; I imagined that I too was a man of the world.

I do not know why my father took it into his head to give us for tutor one of the silliest men I have ever known; his name was Andoche Gaillardet. He was crazy, imbecile, ignorant, a libertine and a hypocrite; he reported everything to my father, and that was his only weapon to control us. We soon shook off the yoke of what authority he possessed

of his own. As control must be founded on justice (say the authors of public law) and as he had missed that point through his ungovernable temper, I was the first to think of resisting and destroying him. The simplest discoveries are the finest. This man took pleasure in mortifying us on our tender points; he had seized at once on that refinement of tyrants. Having noticed that I loved drawing and collected prints and sketches, some of my own, some of other people, and that I kept them all in careful order in my portfolio and took pleasure in them, once when I had committed a great fault he tore up some of my dear drawings; that punished me much; but afterwards his temper led him to do the same out of mere caprice, for trifling faults, or what his bile made him think faults; he continued the same punishment; and through that he was dethroned. Feeling that justice was on my side, despising such an executioner and inspired by vengeance, once when he laid violent hands on my desk, I rammed my hat upon my head, prepared for combat by showing him my two fists, and said to him: "Come on, son of a dog! I'll receive you as you deserve." I was strong; he dared not commit himself; and after that he never ventured to threaten me with himself, only with my father.

We went to school, my brother and I, like men of the world *à bonnes fortunes*, if you please, and were deprived of our divinity and reduced to the humiliating state of becoming schoolboys. I was much ashamed of it; I shut myself up in retreat, and lost a number of acquaintances. At that time I was much allied in friendship with M. de Fronsac, afterwards Duc de Richelieu. When I entered school he was just about to establish himself at Versailles, marry, and get himself put in the Bastille for causing jealousy to the Duc de Bourgogne; and yet he was only two years older than I. I was also intimate with M. de Melun, the Prince

d'Épinoy, killed afterwards by a stag, the Comte de Bavière, the Prince de Soubise, etc. Some time after I went to school, there was a little tragedy played there by the younger boys, to some of whom the latter was related. I was in the amphitheatre in my robe, sitting on a wooden bench, and when he spied me I turned my back upon him. I saw in that way certain women of my acquaintance with whom I had been familiar; what humiliation! But we got out of school sometimes, and then I put all my money into appearing decently and re-establishing myself in fine airs, at theatres, promenades, and private houses. If I have ever been guilty of imprudent outlays it was then, to satisfy my little ambition which, not costly in itself, was much out of proportion with the monthly stipend given to a schoolboy. But any one who had treated me as a schoolboy at such times would have found me mutinous. Why should we sneer at such ambition? Isn't it the very foundation on which that of conquerors is built? A king wants to seem a hero, and a hero to pass for a god. Nevertheless, I was whipped, or as good as that, in my second year of rhetoric, 1711. The Comte de Boufflers, my friend, who had received the government of Flanders and the colonelcy of his regiment in survivance to his father, being in the class with me was whipped for the same fault; we had plotted together a sort of revolt against Père Legay, our head-master; we fired peas at him through a squirt; it made a great uproar. The Maréchal de Boufflers complained to the king, and withdrew his son from college. The poor fellow was mortally hurt; some months later he took the small-pox and died. I shall never forget the character of that lad. He had an unbounded ambition, and means never failed him to obtain all and everything in his little sphere of college life; he beguiled whom he would, and put them

on his side in good and evil; so that in his ideas and his intrigues he had persons of all kinds attached to him, confidants, trumpeters, aiders and abettors, ruffians. But with it all, he had great intelligence in his studies; he carried off all the prizes. He had more esteem than affection for me, and I had more affection than esteem for him.

[1718.] My late father conducted the affairs of his office with such secrecy that this is what happened to me on one occasion. I came in after supper, at one o'clock; the porter told me that the lieutenant-general of police desired to see me; he directed me to write fifteen circular letters from his notes to just so many intendants, and not to go to bed until they were written; my brother had already done his task, which was the same, and had gone to bed by my father's order. I took coffee and got to bed at four o'clock. The matter concerned an increase of the currency which surprised every one, as there had been a rumour of diminishing it. The next day it was made public, but our letters were already sent by couriers. No clerks could be trusted; we ourselves, my brother and I, being little peculating, went to sleep upon it, so that nothing transpired through us; in such matters the petty interest of some one usually leads him to divulge the secret.

I shall never forget what my late father said to me the first time that he admitted me to argue with him on the actions that parliament was then taking against the royal authority; I was counsellor to parliament at the time and he was Keeper of the Seals and president of the council of finance. To all that I related to him of the reasons, arguments, and temper of parliament he merely answered: "My son, has your parliament troops? We have fifty thousand men; the matter reduces itself to that." There's the speech of a great man!

[1720.] We cannot, in my family, define ourselves otherwise than as follows: heart excellent; mind less good than the heart; the tongue worst of all; but as for the latter, it is only a habit. My sister, more than my brother or myself, is made in that way.

I never played but once at *biribi*; I swore, and I have kept to it, to play but that once. It may be thought that I lost; no, much the reverse; I won two hundred and fifty louis, I who am no gambler. I said: "Here are all the little losses I ever made paid back and more than paid. I cannot blame myself for wasting anything on cards." I had gone to Lille, and went in the evening to see M. de Tingri; they were just beginning a game of *biribi*; the banker was losing his time and getting impatient for want of players; I took a hand in that ill-famed game out of courtesy and deference. It was a bait that enticed me, that game, for I won with marvellous rapidity two hundred and fifty louis. I won sixteen *pleins* running, which they said had never been done before. Then I began to lose. I sacrificed fifty louis and put the two hundred on the sword side and got into my carriage, for a number of other players had arrived by that time.

I was the first who imagined, proposed, and executed the furnishing of grain to the troops to be ground by the soldiers and made into bread. Since then many have followed my example. When I arrived at Valenciennes in my intendency of Hainaut, I found much disturbance in the garrisons from the excessive dearness caused by the rise of money under the system of Law. I wished to give bread to the garrisons; the ovens were broken, the commissaries great knaves. Then I bethought me of giving the wheat to the soldiers; and everybody cried out against my notion; as they always do at any novelty. The old war commissaries said it was because I was just out of college where I had

read that the Romans gave grain to their legions. I let them talk; I began to do it. The regent [Duc d'Orléans], who had plenty of intelligence and adored novelties, approved of it; then the critics praised me and the soldier blessed me; he found himself better off, for he now had bread as good as he wanted; he no longer dreaded the rascality of the commissaries; the bran paid for the grinding, and something was left for drink.

Since then my invention has been followed, and in the last war they put it in practice as long as the troops were not camped or in line of battle before the enemy. They ought to give me the honour of that invention, which I can easily prove is mine by my letters and memorials under the ministry of M. Leblanc. I ventured, the following year, to set up a customs-duty on the issue of grain. Every one wanted to issue it for sale to foreigners who were in need of it. The granaries were choked with the old wheat that was rotting. I proposed to sell these permits, and they brought us in a useful duty.

In the same year, 1720, I made all seditions about the dearness of bread (caused by M. Law's changes in the monetary system) cease. I pacified them at a cost of twenty pistoles to the king. I secretly put the wheat in the king's granaries into the market; I gained two bidders not much below a market price which threatened to show a large increase. The whole market held there; it lowered much at the succeeding market, and all the other markets followed the rate of that of Valenciennes.

In the same place I proposed a thing, the execution of which was left to my successor; this was to make boat-bridges of wood not yet put together. Two country bridges over the Meuse had to be replaced; the cost was high; the boats rotted when laid up. I took my idea from the Dutch,

having seen at Saardam logs in store all ready to put together in rafts; and the older these logs grew, the better they were. I made a report about having boats of logs cut, but not put together, and they were beginning to execute the idea when I returned to Paris.

[1721.] Philippe d'Orléans, regent of France, was under every possible obligation to my late father. Here are some instances: The prince, having, so they said, caballed in Spain with an eye, as was then supposed, to the crown, the wife, and the person of Philip V., was hastily recalled from his command of the French army. Philip V. sent a Franciscan friar here, who knew all about the conspiracy, and the Prince de Chalais was commissioned by his aunt, Mme. des Ursins, to carry the reports on which the duke was to be interrogated. Louis XIV. intrusted this terrible inquiry to my father, who rendered a report of it directly to his Majesty. He certainly kept faith with the king as he ought, but he turned his opinion in such a way that nothing was either done or said to the Duc d'Orléans. The late king, no doubt, shut up in his own breast the truths he may have discovered; but in his heart his Majesty had little esteem for his nephew, and so it appeared in his will, by which the late king took from the regent all that he could think of.

On other occasions — the *lit de justice* at the Tuileries, the discovery of the conspiracy of Cellamare, and the *chambre ardente* of Bretagne — the Keeper of the Seals, my late father, saved the regent's authority, his honour, and perhaps his liberty and his life, as every one knows. Unhappily, this safety, procured in so many ways, only served for misuse, of which my father was the first victim, being dismissed rather hastily after the last important services obtained from him.

The Duc de Saint-Simon is one of our enemies, because he

wished great ill to my father, taxing him with ingratitude; and here is the reason of that. He claims that he contributed more than any other to put my father in the ministry, and that my father did not do the things he promised him as bonus on the bargain. Now, what were those things? That little sulker wanted the Duc du Maine brought to trial, and his head cut off, and the Duc de Saint-Simon was to have the grand-mastership of artillery. Just see the odious, unjust, and anthropophagous nature of that little bigot, without genius, full of vanity and never serving, moreover, in any war! My father seeing that matters were pacified, the bastards reduced, punished, sent to prison or exile, and their whole party unhorsed (which was one of the great performances of his ministry), he did not choose to go further, nor to mix up private interests with the motives for the great blows he had struck. Hence the little duke and his gang wanted mortal harm to my father, and called him ungrateful,—as if gratitude, which is a virtue, can be proved by crimes!

[December, 1723.] The Duc d'Orléans died suddenly at Versailles. I had talked with him the evening before for a long time; he made me start during the night for Flanders; as soon as I reached Valenciennes the next day, about eight in the evening, while I was talking with the Prince de Tingri by his fireside, they came and told him there was a courier at the gates of the town who had brought me a package; it was to tell me of the sudden death of his Royal Highness.

It seemed to me I still saw him arriving, the evening before his death, from l'Étoile, a little house which the Duchesse d'Orléans had arranged for herself in the midst of the woods of the great park of Versailles. The weather was vile; the regent had the beginnings of a cold which gave him

a suffocating catarrh which strangled him; he wore a thick red overcoat and coughed a great deal; the neck short, the eyes suffused, the whole face puffy; even his activity of mind seemed oppressed by his bodily organs; he searched for what he wanted to say. He gave me his orders; told me to start that night, and I talked with him for half an hour; then he wished me a good journey, and the next day at the same hour, he died.

[1724.] The king has never yet spoken to me but once — I except from that the time he did me honour to ask my opinion at the council, when I was called to the council of despatches. This once happened when he had breakfasted and was about to start on a fox chase; he spoke of the side on which the fox was, and where it might lead him. I thought to join in the conversation, I, who know nothing about hunting, and I said if he hunted a wolf it might take him as far as Maintenon. He looked at me, and said, "Ah! monsieur, there's a wide difference between a fox and a wolf." That is all his Majesty has yet said to me; though my person must be well-known to him, and I give myself much trouble in his service.

[1725.] I shall never forget the horror of the calamities suffered in France on the arrival of Queen Marie Leczinska. Continual rains had caused a famine, increased by the bad government under M. le Duc. That government, no matter what people say, was even more injurious through its want of comprehension than from any selfish views, which did not enter into it as much as people said. The government took very costly pains to bring in foreign wheat; which only increased alarm and, consequently, dearness. I went that autumn to my own house, at Réveillon in Brie; and being then only four leagues from Sézanne I went incognito to see the queen, who was to sleep there, arrive. Impossible to

represent the unheard-of wretchedness of the country; it was harvest-time, and crops of all kinds could not be gathered on account of the continual rains. The poor labourers were eagerly watching for a dry moment at which to reap them. Nevertheless, the land was trodden down for the width of some rods. They had made the peasantry march in line to flatten the roads along which the queen was to pass; they were only the worse for it; so that often her Majesty came near being drowned; she was dragged from her carriage by strength of arm as best they could. In several of her lodging places she and her suite floated in water, which was everywhere, and this in spite of the infinite pains taken by a tyrannical ministry.

The horses of the equipages were tired out, and all those of the peasantry were requisitioned for a circumference of ten leagues to draw the baggage. The seigneurs and ladies, seeing their own horses in this plight, had taken a fancy to use the miserable animals of the neighbourhood; they paid for them as they could, and did not feed them. When the requisitioned relays did not appear, these horses, thus seized upon, were made to do double stages. I went to walk after supper, on the large square of Sézanne; the rain had stopped for a moment; I spoke to some poor peasants; they had their horses with them fastened to the back of their carts without feed for the night. Some told me that their animals had eaten nothing for three days. Ten were harnessed in place of four; judge how many were thus used. Our sub-delegate ordered nineteen hundred horses to be furnished instead of fifteen hundred which were required; the wise precaution of an officer who feared the service might fail through him. There was much displeasure at M. Lescapier, intendant of Champagne, where everything was lacking, and the king's guards had neither rations nor

beds. The Duc de Noailles refused to allow this intendant to enter the queen's presence to pay his court.

On the top of all this toil and drudgery came orders to furnish Paris from a circuit of twenty leagues with a certain quantity of wheat, and the unfortunate region of which I speak was within that circumference. There had been dangerous riots in Paris; bread was dearer than in 1709. The people believed the grain sent to Paris would never be paid for (it was, however, in the end); so this in itself was another scourge on the country. The three parishes dependent on my estate were far enough from Paris on one side and from Sézanne on the other to escape these curses, and were not requisitioned for anything. The inhabitants imagined that it was certainly through my influence; some regard for me may have been in it; but I was none the better paid for it.

[1718-1727.] My affairs with Mme. de G——.

I was twenty-three years old. Mme. de G—— was the same age with nearly two months difference. I began an intrigue with her, which lasted only a year, and ended by my journey and mission to Hainaut as intendant. In 1721 she became a widow. She then took La R——, who has since married her. She had a touching face, was sincere and full of feeling, constant, reasonable, and generous; extremely seductive in a tête-à-tête with a lover. As women are always more advanced than men, and as she had been married very young, she had, at first, a superiority over me which made me dread her. Suddenly she cast her eyes upon me, more than I on her. I soon saw that I should succeed, and boldness came to me, little by little. After that I loved her much, and I have often regretted our rupture. I met her afterwards as a friend; but since her marriage I do not go to her house. Religion had some

share in her marriage. She was extremely touched by the death of Mme. de Prie.¹

Mme. de Prie was her cousin. She arrived from the embassy to Savoie in the winter of 1719. At this time Mme. de G—— and I were inseparable. Soon she was a third between us. Truly the pink of fashion, was Mme. de Prie at that time; the prettiest face, adorned with even more grace than beauty; a free mind that went to all things, genius, ambition, and giddy with much wit. We all know how she governed the State for two years. To say that she governed it well is another thing. At heart she was a great libertine, and so indifferent to vice that she hid without any effort the great number of her love affairs. When she had loved any one she did not cease to retain much friendship for him and to do what she could for his advancement.

She arrived in Paris ruined by the embassy. It was then a question of how to mend the fortunes of the family, and she succeeded well in doing so. Mmes. de Verrue and de Saissac delivered her to M. le Duc, and the affair was soon concluded. We were, her cousin and I, in the confidence of all, and for a year none of the details were withheld from me.

When Mme. de G—— left me and took another on account of my absence, M. le Duc quarrelled with her for it and scolded her well, for which I was under an obligation to him. Mme. de Prie went to Versailles, where she fixed her abode while the Court was there. I saw her less; she always looked pleasantly at me, but little by little her grandeur made her less attentive to former friends. Her

¹ Agnès Berthelot de Pléneuf, married to the Marquis de Prie, ambassador at Turin; afterwards the mistress of M. le Duc during the time he was prime-minister. —FR. ED.

regard for me came in puffs, though violently. She asked me to bring my brother, who was then in favour with the regent, to see her. I presented him and they became friends; but evil came of it, and quickly. The regent died; M. le Duc was prime-minister; Mme. de Prie governed all, and governed ill; my brother was removed from his office. Mme. de Prie took me aside one day at her house and made a thousand complaints against him. She proposed to me to go as ambassador to England. I left my intendency at Valenciennes, which cost me heavily and was worth little through lack of firmness of the government. This abdication was taken as a want of attachment to M. le Duc.

That prince had always seemed friendly to me before he became prime-minister; until then he never appeared pompous, but suddenly became so; no one approached him; he was possessed of an evil spirit. An opportunity for advancement came to me. M. Begnon died of apoplexy and I asked for the intendency of Paris. La Prie preferred to act for Harlay, who got Strasburg, and for d'Angervilliers, who got Paris. She foolishly thought those men would be useful to her; she was mistaken. As for me, I was good for nothing; I was an old friend who had been enough of an honest man not to wish to profit by her good graces. She had the appearance of great influence; but M. de Fréjus held firm and laughed at her. Vexation possessed her; she grew thin and hideous. I saw her constantly; my judgment and knowledge on matters of State were by this time tolerably formed; I gave her good advice; she listened, approved, but by that time she was half crazy. She was haughty to every one. I told her the truth about herself when she did nothing to help me to the intendency of Paris. After that, I only went to her house as a stranger, often unwelcome; when I found her alone, we told each other truths.

Mme. de La Rau . . ., formerly Mme. de G——, bears her poverty nobly. Her husband has neither birth, nor property, nor intelligence; but he has a regiment and possesses certain advantages, they say. I wish her a long life and happiness; but I have at present better than she, in every way.

[October, 1727.] Mme. de Prie died, poisoned by her own act; the circumstances were singular. Some time before the overthrow of M. le Duc, her dismissal and exile, she began to grow so thin that she was nothing more than a woman's head on a spider's body. When she was exiled to Courbépine, her estate, she resolved to poison herself on such a day, at such a hour, in such a month. She announced her death as a prophecy; nobody believed it; she seemed gay; and there is no need to say it was affected, because it was her nature to be gay. The fact is she had not strength of mind enough to profit by her misfortunes; on the contrary, she felt she could not show herself without influence and exposed to her enemies after having had so much authority; and this silly shame made her wish to imitate the example of English people.

However that may be, she gathered about her at Courbépine all pleasures; the Court people came; they danced, they made good cheer, they acted comedies; she herself played in one two days before her voluntary death, and recited three hundred verses by heart with as much feeling and spirit as if she were swimming in a lasting contentment. She took for her lover the nephew of the Abbé d'Amfreville (from whom I learned these circumstances); a sensible, intelligent fellow, young, with some countenance, and, above all, a very civil lad. She predicted to him her death at a fixed time; he did not believe it, but exhorted her, in case it were true, to give up the cowardly project. Nothing was

ever more determined. She gave her lover a diamond not worth five hundred crowns, and sent him, two days before her death to carry to a secret address in Rouen fifty thousand crowns' worth of diamonds. On his return he found her dead at the appointed hour; but what she had not foreseen were the terrible sufferings in which she died, so great that the toes of her feet turned backward. Here, for those who give heed to it, is enough to make one reflect on compacts with the devil, who comes at an hour agreed upon to twist our necks, though with her it was her legs.

[1730.] After M. le Duc was dismissed, Cardinal de Fleury became prime-minister. M. d'Angervilliers was regarded as certain to take the place, as minister of war, of M. Leblanc, who was dying. My brother was a close friend of M. d'Angervilliers and took his measures from afar. He even acted as a good brother, a very good brother, to bring my affairs to a favourable point. But what sort of soul has a contemptible fellow coming out of finance and grafted on the Court! The said d'Angervilliers did us on this occasion one of the worst rascalities I have ever known. All was in it; ingratitude, cheatery, base selfish interests, and treachery. He had many obligations to my brother, both before and after he was minister of war. It is true that my said brother has not the art of attaching to him those whom he serves. His inattention is the chief cause of this; it makes him accused of lacking principle in friendship.

D'Angervilliers assured us he would make my affair his own, and would in the first place work briskly and efficaciously on Cardinal de Fleury. So far from that, do you know what he did? He did me all the ill-turns he could. This was discovered later, and acknowledged by those who abetted him, but they were not guilty, they were only tools.

However, I went myself to the cardinal, and got several

of my friends to act. I found him very well disposed to give me the intendancy of Lille. On my second conversation with him nothing could be more certain, short of written papers. But d'Angervilliers warned M. Méliand, my father-in-law, that there was absolute impossibility and total resistance on the part of the cardinal for what I wanted, etc. And that is how it ended; for what cannot influence do when once the plank is laid?

The bishops have sent to Rome a goodly number of copies of a memorial signed by lawyers;¹ they scream like eagles; the upper clergy are getting Romanized. Everything is in furious fermentation in church affairs; and Rome, they say, is going to make a fine uproar; so the cardinal is worried, and no longer knows what he is about. The king becomes less capable than ever; the Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin, burns with ambition, and, yielding to his bad temper, picks quarrels with every one who can tremble under him. Sorrow to him who has anything to fear, or cannot make secure.

[End of 1730.] To define the Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin, you must know that there was never in the world an abler man than he for his own affairs, for working them on a grand scale, for making a great and noble fortune, and getting it by the surest methods; but he is in all things the centre of his circle, the final end and aim of all his meditations. If he had but a little willingness for his offices, all would go well; but that will never be. His mind is very just, but not lofty, seeing the end to which he has confined himself in making use of so many means. I have a fancy to speak fundamentally of him and his fortune.

He hated his elder brother, whose merit was so brilliant

¹ Forty lawyers had signed a "Memorial on the effects of the decrees of Parliament in the matter of the abuse of appeals." This was suppressed by order of the Council; but on a declaration explaining its meaning, a new decree was issued accepting the Memorial. — FR. ED.

that it dazzled every one. Partly from this hatred, and partly from sound policy, he took the contrary side to the Jesuits, so as to keep his feet if harm came through his brother's intrigues. The brother died; the younger became a great worker; quitted belles-lettres, modish airs, horses, etc., for he laid claim to *bonnes fortunes* and danced well. He married an heiress, Mlle. Desmontées, tall and well-made, who had had "affairs"; her father was a merchant at Orléans, and had done well. Chauvelin has made her externally so exemplary that she is liked and admired at Court; he applied himself to form her and gave all his time to it; he never leaves her a step, charged as he is with public business; he watches over her in the houses where she sups; he follows her still, makes her leave off rouge (so that she now has none except at the end of her nose); he changes her maids, and her footmen, and makes her waiting-woman render him an account every morning of Madame's clothes; she is dismissed before Madame awakes; he will interrupt a State affair to do this; it is marvellous.

Now, this Keeper of Seals must be either a very commonplace genius, or a very great one, but he certainly meddles with little things when he throws himself into such pettiness; for do not doubt that he is petty in this; to seek his own good in this coarse way is to go against his own good; he will never make himself a great man except as a financier. But a financier has the style of a prince, and not the condition, mind, and manners of a churl.

He became president of a court of justice through a shrewd intrigue which gave him the office at a bargain. Let us draw a curtain over the means used by the gentlemen of parliament to make themselves useful to the Court; he who desires to be truly agreeable cannot avoid selling his colleagues, and spying upon them, etc. It is certain that our hero ob-

tained the chief part of his position from his influence at Court. He did the business of several great seigneurs; he was guardian of the little Duc d'Aumont, whose dilapidated affairs he arranged in a wonderful way; he is an able economist. He wanted to advance himself under the regent; that prince used to say that everything talked *Chauvelin* to him; the very stones echoed that tiresome name, for he sent the great lords and all their creatures to him to sing his praises and ask for a ministry.

The regent died without having done anything for him. The period of M. le Duc seemed to him the burning of straw, and he wisely attached himself to M. de Fréjus, afterwards Cardinal de Fleury; seeing that he had to do so, he did not do it by halves. The cardinal, old, and full of a womanish spirit, is suspicious to excess of attachments shown to him; a trifle can strand them. The Maréchal d'Uxelles stood by Chauvelin, and this support did the rest. The old maréchal obtained from the cardinal permission to make a statesman and a personage of him. He taught him the secrets of State, and put him up to the present situation of foreign affairs. He is a great worker by choice, and of surprising assiduity; and he worked as much before he was in office as after; as soon as he has dined he goes back to his desk, and stays there till they tell him dessert is served in his wife's room; for a long time now he has not supped, — another little thing that has the savour of a great man. Take notice of what it is to resemble great men in little ways.

In office he meddles with nothing apparently, and everything in reality; he has made himself hated by foreigners and the public; he made the miserable treaty of Seville — miserable, because we do not choose to execute it; a violent start-out to end in smoke, pistol words, and acts of snow! And he throws back all those acts of cowardice on the



Monsieur le Duc

benignity of the cardinal! Well, well! he never persuaded him to the slightest virile action. Nothing of good has ever come from him; not even the management of the library; all that we have seen of his doing is hard, miserable, dissembling. He boasts of writing everything with his own hand; he cracks his stomach sitting at his desk; pettiness of genius, breadth of greed! What he has done well, has been to enrich himself magnificently. It is a secret of State that the English pay our ministers largely; perhaps the throne tolerates a part of this. What principles! Until the present time he has committed no mistake against his fortune, and I am awaiting the upshot of so tremendous a cleverness, as of a play which is difficult to end off. He makes his way underground like a mole; he seems apart from the Court; but he has supporters there all ready to carry him to the pinnacle as soon as the cardinal is retired. They say it is the house of Condé to which he has attached himself, and also that shares in the India Company are the instrument. Poor kingdom! what have you done to God to be thus trampled under foot?

[Since writing this, I have known the Keeper of the Seals better, and I find that a great part of the above is false, and that he deserves real praise for his genius, his virtue, and his love for the good of the State.]

[1731.] The intendant of Aube has just been dismissed, or rather, he dismissed himself,—and intentionally. He is an intractable, self-willed man, of solid integrity and other virtues of that nature. Proud of these said virtues, which are rare, he is a great worker, with a systematic mind and ability to use it. Properly, he ought to have neither superiors nor inferiors; as soon as he has dealings with men he becomes unsocial in business; he lends himself to none of the foibles of the day. But a business once cut out for him,

and he having bound himself to do it, he does it better than others. In plain French he is a mill of justice and a mechanical mill-stream, in which he must go according as he is set a-going. They could make no use of him in the intendancy of Caen, because he got himself stoned at the outset. He paid no heed to its being inevitable (until better times) that all about the throne should share in unjust favours. He wanted to be a prompt reformer in special details, without considering that an intendant is not enough of a great seigneur for that. He wanted to change the whole of the assessment of the arbitrary taxes, especially that of the poll-tax. Those he thus relieved did not thank him; they thought, as usual, it was only justice; and those whose tax he increased uttered such loud cries, wanting to eat him up, that the echo of them besieged both throne and Court. He was thought a bad intendant because he was a good one. At Soissons he did almost the same thing in his department, where he was indignant at the inconveniences of the Picardy Canal and the injustices surrounding that little enterprise for the public good, which has its spring, they say, in the private interest of a great seigneur. So there he was on ill-terms with the Court.

And yet if I were prime-minister I would like to have thirty intendants of his stamp; I could do good with disinterested and active agents like him. The excellence of my system could be made, please God, acceptable to such minds; and even if their conviction did not concur at once with mine, I could soon obtain it in various ways without displeasing or constraining them; for we can win men of honour by their good foibles better than villains by their multiplied and inextricable vices.

I who write this came near being unhorsed in my intendancy; or at least, I was so disgusted with governing from a

town-hall a great city to which I wished to do the greatest good, that I went, being then young, without phlegm or experience and with brutality and offensiveness, against the torrent; I respected little their customs; I did not regard their patrimonial property as belonging to them; I ill-treated the provost, who was a man of the people, though a rascal. I recognize my mistake.

About this time [August, 1731] I began to be better known by Cardinal de Fleury and the Keeper of the Seals. Thinking much of many things concerning the affairs of the day, I had occasion to widen my ideas by several conversations which I had at Versailles with persons enlightened as to matters of Church and State; so that I ventured to discourse about them with the ministers, and after a while to give them my opinions, which pleased them, and were, assuredly, more praised than they deserved.

The affair of the Constitution [bull *Unigenitus*], those of parliament, of the two powers, Church and State, and of the lawyers, were all making a great noise at this time, and certainly the king's authority was ill-maintained; it was in jeopardy, being obeyed in nothing; and instead of calming minds on certain points, new subjects of dispute were being constantly brought forward. I wrote a memorial on all this, of which I keep a copy among my compositions. I sent it to Cardinal de Fleury, then at Issy, and going to Versailles the following Sunday I went to see his Eminence. The Keeper of the Seals came out first and gave me a great greeting; asked me why it was so long since I had come to see him and Mme. Chauvelin, asked me to dinner, and said he wanted to talk with me. I suspected he had read my memorial; and this greeting was much observed by those present, to whom he did not speak, except to me. Next came the cardinal, on his way to the king; he saw me in the crowd, drew me apart,

and said these words: "Very good, monsieur, very good; I have read and reread your paper; nothing could be better! you show yourself trained to great and good principles, thoroughly informed, going even to maxims, and keeping in a state to make use of them in whatever posts it may please the king to place you for his service." I answered that I had tried to prove on this occasion that I wished to be useful, and that I had so few opportunities to show it that I had put myself forward where I was not invited. He continued his expressions of approbation, leading me along with him part of his way. All this did not fail to give me a certain air of favour, and several persons said to me, "You seem to be fêted in this region."

The next day I received in Paris a letter from his Eminence, which was no doubt signed before he spoke to me; it contained very flattering things; I keep it with the copy of my article. A few days later, appeared the declaration of the king commanding absolute silence about the bull *Unigenitus*; and the Keeper of the Seals assured me that this order would be enforced rigorously and steadily. I know, beyond all doubt, that in this they followed my memorial, of which this very injunction forms a section, with the reasons I brought to support it.

[September 23.] The cardinal stopped me as I was leaving his *coucher*, and again spoke, before one of his friends, of my memorial, giving me praises that I do not like to repeat, but which allowed me to augur much; and the person I mentioned, following me into the gallery, added that he knew no man so chary of praise as his Eminence; and that those he now gave me were significant of much to follow. His Eminence had invited me to dinner on the following day; he was very gay, and often addressed me; to which I answered in a way that ought to have satisfied him with

me, for I think I was pretty good company. After dinner the cardinal held circle for so long that some were obliged to take leave of him; I to go to the council, the rest for other reasons. I went, after the council, to see the Keeper of the Seals, who invited me to visit him at Grosbois.

[December, 1731.] It is fully five years since I was brought into a political conference which was excellent; it was called the "Entresol;" because the first meetings were held at the apartment of the Abbé Alary, of the French Academy, at the present time tutor to the king's children. He lived then in the Place Vendôme in President Hénault's house, where he hired the apartment on the *entresol* facing the street. [Here follow the names of the members, twenty-three in all; the Abbé Alary being the president.]

We assembled every Saturday, and were, or ought to have been, in our places at 5 o'clock, remaining till 8. Each session of three hours was divided into three parts: I. The reading of my summary of public matters; answers to questions; searching and interesting conversation on public news; arguments and political conjectures; good elucidations, furnished usually by our ex-ambassadors. We always had a large atlas on the table to follow intelligently the locality of events. II. Conversation, in which was discussed, without any reserve but with entire confidence, all that was said in the world on great and important matters. This conversation on general news certainly never languished, being inspired by the train of curiosity into which the preceding exercise had put us; in fact, we had difficulty in ending the conversation to give place to the third part of our session. III. We read, generally in turn, the essays of our academicians on their special topics. It was noticeable that we often came out of our own departments to make little dissertations on a variety of things; this hap-

pened several times with me. To these works of our own was added the reading of the newest political articles, which each of us strove to be the first to obtain. Also we read letters from foreign countries, where we all kept up as much correspondence as we could; I had some in Italy that was always very sure.

Having given this general idea of the Entresol, I must also tell the blame that was cast upon it, which led to its breaking up,—a catastrophe not in any way produced by decadence or degeneration, for we were never so prosperous or so in love with our assembly as when it came to an end.

Everything is turned into ridicule; the whole society of the present day is supercilious; it is the fashion to despise good things in proportion as they are better than others. It was said that we governed the State; that we meddled with matters that did not concern us. I never got up in the morning without thinking to myself: "To-day we shall get our ears boxed." I could see myself various things that were real faults. Our president, the Abbé Alary, made it too much a feather of his cap to have been the founder and head of the assembly; he spoke of it everywhere; it enraged me to see how little we hid our joys. I said, "Let us be content within us, and make ourselves forgotten."

Cardinal de Fleury showed a great liking for the Entresol; he often spoke of us, and never lost an occasion to inquire about our occupations, the work of each of us, the topics, etc. But the Keeper of the Seals wished us evil on the sly; he said good of us; proposed subjects for discussion and questioned us, in imitation of his master the cardinal; but all the while he was plotting a *coup de Jarnac*.

The Abbé Alary was appointed tutor to the king's children; he accepted the employment with views far removed from ambition. He became in this way a resident of Ver-

sailles, but he made a bargain, which the cardinal announced himself, that it should be without prejudice to the Entresol, and that he should have leave every Saturday to come into Paris, hold the Entresol as usual, and return to Versailles on Sunday.

At Court they now began to set traps for him; he had enemies jealous of his favour with the cardinal, who suspected him for the Entresol, and the Entresol through him. They said he told among us things that he learned at Versailles; they did us harm by asserting we were dangerous; so that finally the evil broke forth. At the beginning of the autumn the Abbé Alary arrived one Saturday when only three of us had come. "I am stabbed to the heart," he said. "The cardinal told me yesterday that we were meddling with too many things in the Entresol, and that even foreigners were complaining of us." We agreed to keep this speech extremely secret, even from our colleagues who had not yet arrived; I was of opinion that we ought to continue our meetings and keep silent on the things of the day. But the others thought better to interrupt them and take the pretext of the holidays to see which way the wind lay. I avoided, while they lasted, saying a word about the Entresol to the cardinal or the Keeper of the Seals, lest they should give me the same intimation.

During the holidays the Abbé de Saint-Pierre proposed to call a special Entresol to examine political projects. He was already in possession of the right to send his Eminence political memorials on the affairs of the day; it was thought that the weariness and impatience of the cardinal had spouted upon the Entresol; but it was not so. It is true that his Eminence had once said to the Abbé Alary: "You have a sad and disastrous politician in your Conference, and that is the Abbé de Saint-Pierre." But the cardinal's dis-

pleasure went no farther, for it is certain that he writes to him and reads his memoranda. The Abbé asserts also that a commission is about to be appointed to reform taxation, based upon his memorials. However that may be, here are two letters which the Abbé de Saint-Pierre received from his Eminence — that is to say, the parts of them which relate to the Entresol:—

“In regard to the assemblies of your Entresol, I cannot conceal from you that so bad a usage is being made of them by the discussion of news at the meetings, that even foreigners complain; and you must agree that this sort of thing is very pernicious. . . .

“I see by your letter of yesterday that you propose to treat in your assemblies of political works. As such matters usually lead farther than is intended, it is not suitable that they should be made a topic; there are plenty of other subjects which cannot have the same consequences and are not less worthy of attention. Therefore, supposing that you judge it desirable to continue your assemblies, I beg you to pay attention that nothing is spoken of which any ground of complaint can be made.”

The Abbé de Saint-Pierre in sending me these letters wrote me that it was plain all political discussion was forbidden, and he had written to the cardinal that he submitted.

The ridicule of all this, which I had greatly dreaded, was that the whole Court soon knew that the Entresol had been forbidden; which drew down much sarcasm on the minister and gave rise to various lampoons against him, which were of no benefit whatever to us. It was said that the Entresol had penetrated the secrets of State; that for this reason we were suppressed; that we were a living inquisition on the State, etc. The Duc de Noailles, who was endeavouring at that time to make acquaintance with me, shrugged his

shoulders very high and asked me many questions as to the cause of this suspension, which I answered as I chose.

Having to speak to the Keeper of the Seals on certain matters, he drew me on to the subject of the Entresol, and told me his bad reasons. He began by saying that he had mingled very little in the matter, but that the cardinal, etc., etc; of which I believed nothing, though a man must seem to believe everything when God has called him into this vocation; what is most annoying on such occasions is that they tell so badly the lie you must seem to believe that they take you for a simpleton. I clubbed him with reasons, as, for example, that nothing had taken place without authority from the government, for he himself, and the cardinal, had talked to us of the Entresol scores of times, approving and praising us in every way.

He assured me that I, personally, had not displeased the cardinal, but he said to me, twice over, for he knew we were meeting in spite of the injunction, "Is it quite certain, monsieur, that this is to end? Will you promise it to me?" This insistency obliged me to give him my word; and henceforth we had to renounce the Entresol entirely until better times.

II.

1732—1737.

SOME time after the breaking-up of the Entresol the Keeper of the Seals overwhelmed me with friendly attentions and protestations of his desire to employ and advance me. He assured me I stood very well and in the best manner with the cardinal; admitting that they had not always felt so, believing me little inclined to serious work; he said I must address myself to him for any views that I might have, and I would see by results how sincere he was, and that he would not say this if it were not so. "Ah!" he added, "if you would be one of us!" meaning by that an embassy (and later he let me know that he meant the embassy to England, which would surely have led me to nothing). He added that it was ridiculous I had not been employed already; that this must be changed; that they wanted to make much use of me; that I had just been appointed on several committees of the council which were confidential; and on New-Year's day he repeated the same things, to which I answered as he wished.

The Duc de Noailles was at this time very anxious to know me more intimately; he invited me to dinner and expressed a wish that I would often come to him. He had seen a good many things of my doing in my class of work, which entered, it was said, into his own views for the position of prime-minister, the post he counted on obtaining.

I gave a new memorial to the cardinal on the subject of finances. He said the other day to some one, in these

very words, that there was no one who gave more time to work than I, or made a better use of that time.

I have an imaginative and eager spirit; if only some novelty or sympathetic desire excites it, it goes extremely far,—to folly if I don't take care. What I have of mind, I have it accurate; my heart and sentiments are slow, but sturdy and tenacious at times, that is to say, obstinate; the memory is quick and capable. I have much taste, which leads me naturally towards the right and the perfect. I am by nature very gay, easily embarrassed, shy and timid, not being sanguine; but when my bile is stirred I can go through fire; I fear danger at a distance, but when I am in it I can face it. I have always loved projects and their execution pretty well, but little by little, eagerly at first and with great delight while my project is hot; then I slacken and feel distaste; but I resume it, and bring it to a conclusion if it is good. I take time about it; and by that means I have brought many a great enterprise to success.

Mme. de Ch . . . has a slow mind, little or no imagination; the mind is just, but it needs more reflection in its slowness. There are things of which she has no idea except through taste, though belonging to the intellect,—comparative taste, which is not exercised on things little known to her. Her sentiments are very keen, of great force, vigorous, robust like the organs of her body. She is robustly constituted; but these devilish sentiments, a force surmounting wisdom, facility in following example, eagerness for all flattering things, have destroyed her nobler characteristics. Rectitude, excellent inclinations, emulation, the idea of the great and the very great, all that being hers by nature might make her worthy of being a veritable heroine of romance or a Roman matron; through courage

alone she ceases to be too facile; she becomes on the contrary, madly intrepid even to peril.

[June 30, 1732.] I have just dismissed a lacquey named Bourguignon. I have had some regret about it from a reflection that I made the other day of the point to which the fellow was a veritable lacquey, for it would be impossible to find a more complete model if one wished to depict the species.

He was chunky, — insolent, — square-faced, — thick nosed, — brownish, — unclean, — long, curling hair, — hard on his clothes, — dirty in linen, — toes turned out so far that his body twisted as he walked; — always in a tavern or a brothel; — drunk on nothing. Speech not heard through his big lips swollen with wine, — *chercheur de midi à quatorze heures*; great arguer on all that is said to him; — and, to cap the climax of perfection in his state of life, married to a cook who beats him.

[July 28.] During the first half of this year [1732] I was several months without taking any part in public affairs; I did not wish to give myself out as a maker of memorials. But the agitation in parliament concerning the manifesto of the Archbishop of Paris condemning the "Gazette Ecclésiastique" brought the attention of the ministers back to me.

The Keeper of the Seals has become my best friend and gives me all sorts of confidences; he instructs me on the present state of affairs. He invited me to Grosbois; I dined there to-day and spent the evening. He told me that he had spoken to the cardinal of me; and that if I were sent on any mission I need not be troubled about expense, for my good conduct and disinterestedness were known, and I should be aided as to costs; meantime I must be useful to the service in all ways, inform myself of what

was going on, see the best and the highest company, go much to his house, where all France abounded, and to Fontainebleau; I was to regard his house as mine; I could make acquaintances there, which I now lacked, to keep me more *au fait* of secret affairs and of the Court.

He spoke much of himself and of the manner in which he had behaved towards the world. He told me that I must make more acquaintances and be known for what I was worth. That I must also study principles in the manuscripts to which he had already given me access, and that he had certain treatises on agreements between two powers, and maxims on the power of the king, on ecclesiastical affairs, etc., which it was almost necessary to know by heart, and he would let me copy them (which I did later). He even descended to giving me lessons on the manner in which I should pay my court and succeed with the cardinal; also on cards and the occasions when I ought to play; as to which I told him I was so dull at cards that I was always bored and scolded and laughed at, and infallibly lost my money.

I also told him that it was necessary I should go and attend to my affairs in Touraine; to which he made great resistance. He said, "Why go, when you see what need we have of you?" It was then a question of a *chambre de vacation*, to sit instead of that of the parliament of Paris, which would apparently be refused. This chamber was to be composed of councillors of State and masters of petitions; and he wished me to be of it and to take the presidency, which he was certain I could properly fulfil. I represented to him that I was not brought up to that sort of thing, such as making harangues, attending to matters of form, procedures, and so forth. I told him he must, at bottom, have seen my defects, and that among many I had that of being what is called shy

and shame-faced; that I had been badly brought up, for my late father in my youth gave all his preference to my brother, so that he never knew me till the last two years of his life, after I had been employed in the public service. He shrugged his shoulders at what I said about my brother, adding that he knew my father had felt great esteem and confidence in me. I repeated that this had only been at the last, but that when he did know me the change was from black to white.

He gave me many obliging denials of my humble opinion of myself, and said he should always repeat the same thing; that I ought to make myself better known in the world, and he would guarantee the rest; that he was determined that my capacity should be made known by distinguished commissions, such as a treaty of peace or something of that sort. What was quite certain, he said, was that the king knew me now very well; he always read my memorials himself, and said that no one could read my handwriting better than he; at every event in the affairs of parliament he would say: "Is there no memorial by M. d'Argenson about this?" His Majesty, he said, knew many things about me, more than I supposed; he knew, for instance, what I had just said about the way my father changed in his opinion of me, and that I was too shy to make an appearance, etc. Adding that the cardinal said no one had more solid principles for governing than those I had formed for myself.

[July-August, 1732.] The situation of the Keeper of the Seals and Cardinal de Fleury in relation to each other is very curious at the present time. The cardinal, disinterested, compassionate, with upright views, but too weak in execution, with too little courage, does nothing unless under stress of importunity, portioning his willingness to the number, not the weight, of the said importunities; this minister, I say,

believes he will stay in the ministry as long as he lives in the world; meantime his defects are hindrances to all good, both by his counsels and by the situation in which he places his colleagues. For from the moment his Eminence puts any one in office he distrusts them much more than he did the night before; and having placed Chauvelin, Keeper of the Seals, on a pinnacle, the latter is forced to conduct himself with more dexterity than ever; that is to say, he must make neither friends nor enemies. Friends would give umbrage to the cardinal and thus undo the good opinion he has formed of a creature all his own; whom he has advanced to such heights only because he believed him wholly his, good, amiable, and of solid worth without the aid of any intrigue. By making enemies, Chauvelin would only prepare his fall at the moment when the cardinal abandoned him to himself either by death or retirement.

Moreover, the said Keeper of the Seals must take no part between Molinists and Jansenists, but preserve a neutrality very difficult with people as clever as the Jesuits in making others take colour, and who hate, worse than they hate Jansenists, all amphibious beings, neither flesh nor fish. They have never yet failed to do so with any one; sooner or later all will feel it.

What is the upshot of this? That no good comes to the kingdom, no reform, no firm resolution on present matters, as we have lately seen, and shall see again when, authority being totally compromised, flashes of courage are too often useless. But there do come circumstances that corner us, and then the sword must be unsheathed. This is how things are, and we can only replaster and whitewash as long as the government is such as it is.

This situation is a sorry one for the king, for the State, and for our two prime-ministers. For it follows from this

that, little by little, all is breaking up; factions are forming, and even the leading men are ready to put themselves at the head of factions, though they say, foolishly, that there are none. What stupidity! They are being formed, and will be, merit or none, among princes and nobles. Inflammable matters are on all sides: and already we can see the sparks glittering. There are factions now ready formed in parliament of divers parties; the party of the legitimized bastards, Rambouillet, and Sceaux; the partisans of Sceaux, Cardinal de Polignac especially, talk haughtily, with all manner of bravadoes which are tolerated and endured to-day; already the people are beginning to show their affections and their aversions openly.

Then we have at Chantilly a continual assemblage of nobles and of the greatest seigneurs. M. le Duc lives grandly and like a king, honoured in that centre, where every one seems bound to him. That old House of Condé is a powder-magazine of faction and avarice; when it cannot act for one it acts for the other. If the Keeper of the Seals desires to win its affection he must buy it dearly with the blood of the people, as was actually done by the Company of the Indies, misplaced confidence in Moras, and horrible jobbing in shares.

In the end the cardinal will be obliged to install the Keeper of the Seals in his place and retire himself, that Chauvelin may act without fear and show what he can do. The cardinal has already done too much not to complete his work. To do this, the first steps to be taken in the State, vigorous ones, and the result of the present state of things, will be: 1. Complete retreat of the cardinal to Issy. 2. Installation in an absolute manner of the Keeper of the Seals; 3. Change of at least three of the present ministers for followers entirely loyal to the Keeper of the Seals. Con-

sequently another "day of dupes" may be looked for. The question now is to know to what point the king esteems and likes the Keeper of the Seals. Here are Scylla and Charybdis. On one side the evils that I have just named to remedy; and by what remedies? on the other, the fear that the Keeper of the Seals may not be firmly anchored on the king, and will need the favour and support of the cardinal, without which he might soon be overthrown.

On the 18th of September, in the evening, I had a long conversation with the Keeper of the Seals on the present state of affairs, which I have reported elsewhere. [*Mémoires de l'État.*] The following is what he said that concerned me personally: He told me that what he chiefly valued in me was a firmness of heart and mind in which he sympathized; that it was visible in all my opinions on public matters; that inasmuch as my late father had for a long time valued my brother's talents in preference to mine, and had thus blocked my entrance into the world, he intended himself to repair all that. I said to him, after other remarks: "Monsieur, the esteem and confidence you express in me signify something; I have never questioned you much; but now fix me, for I cannot fix myself to anything, not knowing to what you destine me by all this; if I knew it, I would study ardently to make myself more capable of some special employment." He answered, "I' faith, I don't know of any at present;" giving me to understand that he had met with no success for various ideas concerning me.

Some time later, he again suggested the place of president to the parliament when it next became vacant; to which I repeated my objections. He would not admit himself beaten. "If you were employed," he said, "in some foreign negotiations, you would come out of them in a short time much emboldened. For example, I wanted to send you to

England for a year, or even two. What are your domestic arrangements?" I explained them to him candidly, and said, in relation to my wife, that she had not been willing to make herself fit for presentation in the great world; about which he appeared to be already informed. He thought, however, that having enough furniture and silver-ware, I should not need to make a great outlay. He told me what salary in money and profits the king gave to his ambassadors, also that they were exempted from public entries; saying that it was very certain I should not conduct myself, as some of my predecessors did, who enriched their coffers in villainous ways, frauds, commerce, etc. He added that I ought to consider everything, though he had noticed that I had not much ambition, and, in truth, my present place was a fine one in itself, being, at my age, seventh in the Council. He said he did not speak to me of the office of Keeper of the Seals because he held it himself and expected to do so for a long time; but there was that of counsellor to the Council which could not fail me; meantime he would make me proficient by the use of his papers, none of which should be kept from me, nor anything that he knew himself, in order to instruct me; but especially he desired me to go more boldly into society than I did at present. It ended in my telling him that my fate was a very lucky one as it was, with so much honour and confidence from him; that two or three years in this way would teach me many things that I now lacked for the king's service. He told me that while I stayed at Fontainebleau I must have no house but his to dine and sup at; an order which I followed. They made me play high. I won at first, and then lost more than I won.

On the eve of my departure Cardinal de Fleury asked me to dinner; it was a state dinner given to the Marquis Doria,

who was taking leave of the king. His Eminence paid me great attention, thanked me with effusion for several things, and asked me many questions about the estate I was going to visit, and other personal matters.

[December, 1732.] On my return the Keeper of the Seals told me all that had happened as to the affairs of parliament during my absence, and after remarking on the doubt, that I felt myself, as to the false appearances of tranquillity that reigned, he added, in relation to me: "I shall continue to work for you more than ever, and with the views I have already told you." I told him that though I dwelt but little on myself, it was true that I had not wasted my time at my country-house; that I had read and made notes; "which is a good habit," he said. I added that I remembered what he had said to me about the Foreign Affairs, the embassy to England, or similar things. "Yes, that, or something analogous" he replied.

[1733.] The late Comtesse d'Alluye lodged in the Palais-Royal; she was poor, and never well-conducted. Mme. de Fontaine-Martel, who also belongs to the Palais-Royal Court, still lives; she has a house on the garden; but she is rich and miserly, and spends but little on victuals. At the d'Alluye's one breakfasted well on black puddings, sausages, force-meat patties, Muscat wine, and chestnuts. At the Fontaine-Martel's they dined little, never breakfasted, but supped every evening; the suppers piqued themselves on being bad; much gambling at both places. They were very old, both of these women. The Fontaine-Martel had the most friends, and the d'Alluye was the most loved; she was so kind a woman people never ceased to tell her they loved her. The Fontaine-Martel has outbreaks which disgust one with her sometimes, though we laugh at them. She is hated in her household, which is a great sign. The

Bishop of Luçon declares that the Fontaine-Martel has outdone the d'Alluye. Good company went every morning at twelve o'clock to breakfast with the d'Alluye; I call them good company, gay people, busy people, lovers, householders, and that amused the good woman, who took interest in it all; whereas, the Fontaine-Martel collects the *beau-esprits*, about whom she understands nothing, though she did write a story called "Mother Goose." She piques herself on not receiving women who have lovers; but I think worse goes on, in God's eyes, for affairs begin at her house. Both of them have received and entertained poor men in the greatest necessity and decrepitude. The d'Alluye took care of poor Mérimville, the old mousquetaire; she gave him his soup and paid for a cab to bring him to her because she was afraid of his muddy feet on her sofa; but he walked home. The Fontaine-Martel entertained a great number with a like economy and as sensibly; though for the last few years she has the conscience not to be amply served, on account of her erysipelas, and contents herself with getting pleasures through her imagination. God bless them both!

My brother has long wanted me to have the place of chief of council to H. R. H. the Duchesse d'Orléans [widow of the Regent, daughter of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Montespan]. I did not wish to take up the idea without communicating it to the Keeper of the Seals. When I spoke of it this evening I had an opportunity to discover something of his intention to employ me. "Do nothing of the kind," he said; "your brother is furious with his own shackles, being tied to the Duc d'Orléans [her son]: he has intelligence, and, between ourselves, ambition; he wants to put the same shackles on you; there is a maintenance in it, but to you it would bring no good. A court of old women, a princess who never comes to Versailles, and may quarrel with the king; what would

you do then? Keep out of it, I advise you. For," he went on, "the king may send you ambassador to Spain, and this affair would only commit and hamper you. Besides, I expect to send you to England in a couple of years." I asked him if I could know positively about that, in order to leave all other studies and prepare myself for it, not having then too much time before me to make myself less incapable when I should be put to work. He told me to leave everything and think only of English affairs; and advised me as to the books I should read. He told me that although he had had many other things to do, he had, from his youth up, made extracts from all the treaties, and he drew out his notes to show them to me; in this way he finds in marginal notes all he needs to put himself at once *au fait* of each treaty cited to him.

[Treaty of Vienna, of March, 1733.] We can see how faulty is the established policy of the present day, and how, more and more, the great absorb the small. Nothing but the expansion of the third party in Europe can arrest the daily progress of this evil. I understand by third party all that is not House of Austria or House of Bourbon; and I mean also by House of Austria that which has taken its place, such as that of Lorraine. We see at the present time that no vacancy occurs in the smallest little State in Europe that the great powers do not dispose of it; and how do they do it? By giving it to themselves or to one of their House. The Emperor, or his allies visibly in concert with him, has committed a crying injustice in suffering the Muscovites to enter Poland. . . . How he could be so blind as to give this hold against him is a great subject of astonishment.

I heard M. de Châteauneuf say, a few days before his death, that during the last four years of his embassy at Constantinople, he received but one letter a year from the king



[Louis XIV.], which was always the same, and said in four lines, "You cannot do me a greater service in your embassy than to induce the Grand Signor to continue his war with the Emperor of Germany." Whatever may be said, I cannot doubt that the three powers, wise, and content with what they have, and free from private passions, as the French, English, and Dutch now are, have already agreed on all this, and will rectify the equilibrium of Europe, such as Henri IV. devised it. . . . Would to God we could take from the Emperor his Italian States, remains and traces of the influence of the private interests that governed France under the regency. Let us strengthen the third party, — there lies the happiness of France and the world. You can strengthen it by giving the Milanais [Lombardy] to the King of Sardinia; we should thus be faithful to him, as he will certainly be to us.

[August, 1733.] The Keeper of the Seals treated me to-day more like a friend than ever, and he seemed to have in view making me minister of finance. He detailed to me some of his ideas to raise money for the war we are about to undertake, particularly by means of the India Company. He said he had lately seen one of my best friends, M. Bernard [Samuel Bernard, the famous banker]; that they had talked about me, and had promised each other to talk with me. This was apropos of the ministry of finance. I replied that Bernard was much attached to him. Our two prime-ministers are having more recourse to Bernard than ever, both in commerce and for loans; so that I shall see more of the latter in future than I have done, as they affect to consult him, and really do so.

My brother has often told me that the Keeper of the Seals speaks, as they say, far from his thought, and that he employs himself in acting a part from morning till night. As for me, whose sincere attachment to his interests he

knows, I have never known him to confide anything to me that was not the truth. But, as minister, he has acquired a habit of not being wholly frank, and one can often see farther into things than he has chosen to tell,—by which he puts me on a scent.

I have lost, this month, the Marquise de Lambert, who though eighty-six years old, had been my friend for a long time. Learned men and honest men will long remember her. See her eulogy in the "*Mercure Galant*" of this month. Some one printed, without her permission, "*The counsels of a mother to a son and daughter*," and "*Sentiments on women*." These works contain a complete and perfect summing up of the morals of society at the present day. For fifteen years I was one of her particular friends, and she had done me the favour to draw me to her house, which did great honour to all those admitted there. I dined with her regularly on Wednesdays, which was one of her days; there we talked and reasoned, without any question of cards, as at the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet so celebrated by Voiture and Balzac.

She tried to persuade me to present myself for a place in the French Academy; an honour which she declared suited me and which I suited; and she assured me of the suffrages of all her friends, of whom she had a great number in the Academy. A ridiculous air had been given to a real influence by pretending that no one would be received into the Academy unless they were received at her house. It is quite certain, however, that she had made half the Academicians.

I dreaded the noise, the envy, and the satire of the little minds who aspired to the place, whether authors or men of the world; also the burden of making an harangue in public; so much fiddle-faddle repelled me, and probably,

now that I have lost Mme. Lambert without accepting her offer, the fortunate moment will never come again, and all, even the temptation, is, thank God, taken from me. Perhaps, however, some day, reputation made, etc. —

[December 18, 1733.] To-day I took my seat for the first time in the Academy of Belles-Lettres.

[1734.] I have had occasion lately to observe more closely the character of my wife, on the occasion of the separation which she is absolutely determined to make. The passion which takes possession of us in events so personally interesting, and many very singular circumstances had led me at first to think very ill of her; but since then I think better; and this better explains in itself the contradictory points of which I here speak.

I find that she has an extraordinarily strong will and what is called great obstinacy, — a defect which is seen only in small minds, the nerves of which are strong in the brain, while their intellectual faculty is so limited that they see things in one aspect only, never extending their gaze far, and above all, never retiring within themselves to reflect and judge afresh what has already been done. This firmness of will depends therefore solely on nerves and fibres; it is virtue in persons who judge rightly, and who hold to their salutary decisions or to their taste for goodness; but when this temperament is given to petty spirits, it makes stubborn heads. We see many children like this; it belongs to childhood.

With this, she has mind, a great deal of mind if you like, but it is all of the small order; it is an army of pygmies, with arms so short, hands so small, eyes so near-sighted that they take in nothing but very small objects, though full of details. This class of mind likes mechanical art; it is fitted to execute manual work, it learns it readily, but it

invents nothing. My wife is thus: she has learned music very well; manages her voice well; I believe she has learned languages; I have known her begin Italian fairly well. She cuts out figures; does varnish-work; makes very finished things in that style and does a great deal of it; she likes medicine; has many birds and animals; understands their ailments and cures them herself.

I fear that our two children will feel the result of this dwarfing of spirit; I have seen much pettiness in my son in proportion to other operations of the mind which he took to in his earliest years. My daughter shows little intelligence, but a very good heart. It must be admitted that the Méliands have little minds, but good behaviour and virtue. On the Le Bret side, Mme. Méliand's brother has some ideas of the grand with a certain facility of intellect; but he does not go far. My mother-in-law has less mind than he; she is undecided. What makes her shine is that she follows with ardour and accuracy whatever she once undertakes. These two families are both absolutely devoid of imagination, which is the luminous part of the soul, leading it to heights, and broadening it.

Our faculties once established, they lead us to good or evil according to circumstances. For instance, from the character given of my wife have resulted avarice and independence. The state of my affairs when I came back from my intendancy may have given some cause for this; it was rather bad, but not incurable, inasmuch as I have restored my affairs naturally.

She loves her private hoard, her allowance, and her diamonds; and as her character did not allow me to wholly confide my affairs to her (after trying to do so), she imagined that I was ruined and should become so more and more. A mistaken jealousy increased her bad opinion of my affairs,

and she set about amassing, urging me to do so, and saving all she could, but in a way to be sole mistress of what she thus acquired. She has the spirit of a miser about that, which is to imagine, falsely, that she is doing it for her children, while at heart it is only from a love of collecting, the stupid enjoyment of which is the only real object. Hence she has become the most miserly woman in Paris, and is gradually being led to deny herself everything.

• This is also what has led her to a taste for independence. She conceives with littleness of mind all that concerns the honourable subordination of wife ; and is indignant at whatever dethrones women in the world. She carries her opinion of the dignity of the mistress of a household far beyond the little way it really goes, and reduces to a very small matter that of the father of the family ; she believes that it is not being a good husband to fail in perpetual and indefatigable attentions to one's wife.

Measuring everything by patterns and principles conceived by obstinacy and pettiness, she has come to be sincere in her greatest contrariness — for I never doubted her sincerity, seeing the manner in which she took up certain quarrels. You cannot sham truth with that nicety of perfection which belongs only to truth itself.

The petty things I have now mentioned have led her to sequester herself from good company, in fact, from all company. Now, we need these admonishers to tell us when we do well or ill in matters about which we might know the truth, but do not tell it to ourselves as the world and society tell it to us. Hence she has come to desire ardently for a withering condition which she alone desires, but she desires it with a persevering ardour as if it were paradise. I mean a divorce, about which society has done me full justice, for not having deserved it, for doing all I could to

avoid it, and for proceeding in the matter with virtue and rare generosity.

[1734.] During the winter of 1734 much was said in public of the grand prospect which would open if the Emperor gave his daughter to Don Carlos. All good citizens ought to shudder at the idea of that project. We owe our blood to our French princes as long as they govern us and can govern us, but when they have expatriated themselves, and endeavour to procure foreign sovereignties, I think that we ought not to sacrifice to them one drop of our blood nor one obole of our money. In the condition of grandeur to which France has attained, Frenchmen ought to put away from them all that increases jealousy against the House of France. Upon this I wrote a memorial and gave it to the Keeper of the Seals, with observations upon it by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre. It has been seen that I liked to communicate to the abbé my work of this nature. That worthy citizen is not duly known, and he does not know himself. He has given a quantity of political works to the public; he aims for a good too far beyond us; hence he repeats himself, turns forever on one axis, and is not read with pleasure. And yet, he is well-informed as to the modern past and present; he has much intelligence, and has devoted himself to a species of profound philosophy now abandoned by all the world, which is, nevertheless, true politics destined to procure the greatest happiness. It is on this ground that I like to consult him, whatever answer, broad or limited, he makes me.

I should like to examine here whether I have or have not self-love; and of what species it is — for everybody has some; it is like bile and gall, disagreeable liquids which ought not to get the upper hand, but the absence of which would kill the individual. We must have self-love if only

to keep us from destroying ourselves by taking no pains for our preservation ; we need it to accompany that source of emulation, and hence of all virtue, which the Creator has put within us, namely : the desire to be distinguished among our equals, the allurements of praise, the fear of blame. Honest men, good citizens love self, but with honourable intentions, as we love a woman we respect. But the vicious and the ambitious love themselves for evil, as they love a strumpet.

Whoso loves himself virtuously and has a noble and great soul has much, and to spare, but has more still in loving something other than himself — his country, his compatriots, virtue, the perfection of the arts, and especially the work he undertakes. It is in this last matter that we find the touchstone of self-love. How do we treat that work ? Is it as a mercenary, as a man who brings all things to bear upon himself, his advancement, his well-being, or as a man who loves the good, who desires that his work be well done even if this is never known ? We are placed here below to make ourselves happy and our compatriots with us, as much as in us lies ; in that way we honour the Creator, whom we do not lose from sight. We ought therefore to train our self-love, if our heart does not incline that way itself. I began this note by saying I should speak of myself ; it is true that the good and evil I have said of self-love, the cases in which I have praised or blamed it, I could only have drawn from nature, and that nature to me unveiled can only be my own.

[March.] The queen had much at heart to obtain a company of cavalry for an officer whom she knew. M. d'Angervilliers answered that she must say a word to the cardinal. The latter frowned, made difficulty, said the man was a fool, though he was known to be a brave officer. The queen,

rebuffed, told her griefs that evening to the king, who said to her: "Why don't you do as I do? I never ask anything of those men." Louis XV. regards himself precisely like a prince of the blood, who has no influence.

Cardinal de Polignac told me an anecdote that he heard from Cardinal Alberoni himself. The King of Spain [Philip V.] never dreamed of returning to reign in France, whatever event might happen; his piety deterred him from violating his oath. Yet sometimes passions do smother the idea of duty, and persuasion does the rest. The manner in which the Duc d'Orléans was conducting the regency and himself, his irreligion, his ridicule of morality was soon known in Spain. The most saintly men are subject to the influence of passions, especially from the side of religion, which has its own passions through the medium of malignant and extravagant pietists. Philip V., thus acted upon, turned his thoughts to the throne of France, having motives, in the present and the past to wish evil to the regent. Had a good understanding existed between them, no room would have been left for thoughts and persuasions under which Philip V.'s integrity succumbed. But Alberoni denied that he had ever seriously thought of the throne of France during the minority.

[July.] Rumours of a coming congress for a general peace being strong, I wrote to the Keeper of the Seals offering myself as one of the plenipotentiaries, and he replied with a positive promise on the subject of that employment, to which he destined me, and on which he has made me work for a year past.

I went on the 24th before the council of despatches on a matter relating to M. de Bassompierre. I there represented to the king all the injustices done to many of his subjects who plead before it. The king talked to me

much. Cardinal de Fleury and the Keeper of the Seals approved the manner in which I gave my opinion before this council.

[August.] Foreign political affairs require two things, which will discourage me henceforth from giving all my care to them as in the past: one is the extreme secrecy towards every one; the other is the difficulty of being cognizant of exactly what is happening at the moment. Hence, while my memorials have been received with a good deal of eagerness by M. Chauvelin, I do not know what becomes of them, unless something should transpire through M. Pecquet, head-clerk of the ministry of Foreign affairs, or I should see some of my ideas followed or some of my phrases used. These reflections incline me to work no longer except for myself; I shall continue to watch what happens, and I expect, in accordance with events, to put on paper material fitted to become useful if I am questioned or employed; otherwise it will not leave my portfolio.

[March, 1735.] Here is another affair which has failed me, and which I fully thought would carry me on a long journey. The Maréchal de Noailles has done me the honour to wish to be one of my friends during the two years since I first knew him. The last time that I dined with him at Versailles before the war he preached ambition to me, and said that he should begin by making me an intendant [commissary-general] in the army. I regarded that as mere talk in the air. Nevertheless, I received while at Argenson a letter from my cousin Balleroy, lieutenant of the company of de Noailles and very intimate with the maréchal, telling me that I was to receive the intendancy of the army in Alsace. I replied saying how much I felt the value of that favour, coming as it did from such an illustrious source. . . . But three weeks before the departure of the

said *maréchal* for Italy this is what happened to me—which no one has ever known, thank God.

He sent for my brother, who sees him oftener than I. The latter came to me that evening and told me that the *maréchal* was determined not to start for Italy unless he had a staff that was wholly devoted to him, that is to say, composed of good fellows, and had me as commissary-general of his army, and he wanted to know whether the place would suit me before he proposed it, for after that it would be a settled affair; as he had already prepared the way with the Keeper of the Seals, and had told him that they could never succeed with the present commissary, a man so suspected, hated, and unsuccessful as Fontanieu, whom it would be very disagreeable to have to dismiss in the middle of a campaign.

After some deliberation I agreed to this proposal. My brother went the next day to carry my consent to the *maréchal*. We waited eight days; the answer was that arrangements were changed; not as regarded me, but as regarded the influence the *maréchal* thought he had in making conditions, and my name had not even been mentioned to the ministers. The *maréchal* having begun to speak to M. Chauvelin about the intendency of his army and his desire to remove Fontanieu, the Keeper of the Seals said to him: "Monsieur le *maréchal*, you will never succeed in getting our cardinal to remove his Fontanieu. I know the man's inefficiency and even his base actions; but he is a writer of memorials which convince the cardinal. He has made himself white as snow on all the matters about which he is accused, and his friends are making him out to be the greatest commissary of the century." On which the *maréchal* did not venture to pronounce my name, for fear he might make me suspected of intrigue.

[June, 1736.] To-day, after working with the cardinal

over a great affair which concerns the union of all the benefices in Franche-Comté, the Keeper of the Seals made me a sign to speak to me privately, and said in a low voice: "You think we are parting for a long time because I am going to Compiègne, but I am thinking about you; I have an idea, but at present I shall not say more." I think this relates to the embassy to Portugal, or to be the head of affairs in Lorraine when King Stanislas goes there to take possession.

[September.] The Duc de Nivernais said the other day that he had gone through some convent, I don't know where, of nuns, and they were all as noble as the king and as ugly as the queen.

The king, no longer able to confine himself to the sole attractions of the queen, has, for the last six months, taken a mistress, Mme. de Mailly, daughter of the Marquis de Nesle. She is well-made, young, but ugly, a great mouth, well-furnished with teeth, and with it all, comical. She has little mind and no views; so the cardinal gave in to the arrangement, seeing that the king required a mistress. He made him give her twenty thousand francs paid once for all, and the proof of it is that her husband, who went about in hackney-coaches, now has a pretty equipage in good taste; people always betray themselves in some way. The affair, however, is managed secretly, as all gallantries should be. Matters are carefully looked to; the entresols and little cabinets of the king have many issues; La Murette is excellent for that. The alleys that lead from La Murette to the apartments of Mlle. de Charolais at the Madrid, are narrow and closed by gates; the tracks of carriages are always seen when the king has slept at La Murette, for Mlle. de Charolais is confidant of it all.¹ It is said that the queen knows

¹ Louise-Anne, daughter of Louis III., Duc de Bourbon, and Louise, daughter of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Montespan. She is mentioned later as "Mademoiselle." — *Tr.*



Cardinal de Fleury

nothing, but suspects the affair, and consoles herself with M. de Nangis, old as he is; ugly as the queen is, he finds his good in it, being used to Ixion's fame in the days of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and the queen not being able to do better.

[September 3.] The Keeper of the Seals told me to-day that nothing was more certain than my appointment as minister to Portugal; that it would be made next month, and my departure fixed for the spring. He said it was desired to unite the two nations closely, and above all to open a great commerce with Portugal; that all the resources of policy and negotiations would be employed for that object, and that the cardinal often spoke of me in connection with this work. He added that to sell certain merchandise cheaper than the English (about which there was misunderstanding) the government would sacrifice two or three millions if necessary, by letting into the secret a few of the great merchants, and that he would soon communicate to me certain papers on the subject. He added that the object was to make the controller-general supply the king with sufficient funds to establish two or three large commercial houses at Lisbon, and then that smaller merchants could go there when the great ones had broken the ice. As it was, the English were imitating all our manufactures of silk, cloth, jewelry, etc., and selling them at lower prices, about which he would tell me when the time came. He said that an ambassador under these circumstances ought to be a man of society, in order to be on close terms with those who managed the internal government of Portugal, for all would go well for our nation if he were well received.

[November 13.] The Keeper of the Seals sent for me to say that I had spoken to my brother of my destination to this employment. I answered that as he himself had not

told me anything positive I could not have done so myself; but, as I would never deceive him, I would admit that I had said in a general way that I was about to be employed. He said that in this profession neither blood, nor tenderness, nor woman should induce a man to speak; and it is true that his tone made me tremble, not for the consequences, but for my indiscretion in itself. I said: "Well, monsieur, do, as to my fault, what you please." He replied that no other harm had yet come of it except that the cardinal felt more coldly towards me; that the thing would get about and compromise me, because what he wanted to do for me he had several times refused to my brother; but he added that he would try to mend matters. As I was leaving the room he called me back to say, "Don't go and repeat what I have said." I promised, but I felt ashamed.

Since then he has written to reassure me; and I have told him that in speaking to my brother I had shown him so many difficulties in the way for me that he now thought the affair would never take place. The truth still is that this secret has not got about at all, and the proof is that none of my friends have mentioned it to me; but one must let ministers say what they like, and not contradict them when they are wrong — so long as the public does not suffer, only our own little vanity, as at present.

[January, 1737.] There is much talk at Court and in Paris of the approaching displacement of the Keeper of the Seals, Chauvelin. Even if the rumours go no farther, he is a discredited man; for his ministry is so delicate that it depends wholly on reputation; he can sustain himself as things are now, but never in the first place after the death of the cardinal. All sorts of things are told about the dissatisfaction of his Eminence with this follower of his own; he now detests him, they say; he has detected him in cheatery,

falsehood, and bad faith. On this, the Court and the public are applauding the idea of a change. I must pronounce upon him that in lesser things he has made a good cause a bad one. He has genius, he works indefatigably, he has views, he has skill, he is not malignant, he has never caused great wrongs to any one. Nevertheless, he is universally hated, and in a manner without precedent, for no one dares to come out and call himself his friend. Why is it? To my thinking it is because he has mingled feigned caresses with the indifference he really felt, and has injured truth by artifice, and this from natural inclination and habit.

We are spectators at this moment of a positive phenomenon in politics: a minister discredited, defamed, undermined, whose fall seems inevitable, who yet remains in office a whole month (the time the situation has now lasted), sleeping neither night nor day, and constraining himself continually. The cardinal wants to compel him to ask for his retirement, but he resists; he will either die in office or be dismissed.

Nevertheless, there is a rumour of a beginning of resistance on the part of the king, and here is the cause of it. At the first show of dislike on the part of the cardinal for his dependant, M. Chauvelin (whose temperament it must be owned is not sympathetic or analogous with that of his Eminence), and perhaps without waiting for the first dislike, M. Chauvelin laid plans to please and so master the king; he cultivated him; he promoted the fortunes of what were called the "Marmousets;" meaning certain of our young seigneurs, small in height, well-powdered, and of very little merit. They hunt with the king, they sup in his cabinet, and may have some influence. At the time of the troubles of the bull *Unigenitus*, the parliament and other matters, the ministry was attacked; MM. d'Épernon and de Gesvres were at the head of the conspiracy, which was called the "Conspiracy of

the Marmousets;" but it came to nought. The two leaders were exiled; they had composed a memorial, which the king himself transcribed, the better to possess it; I have a copy, and it was pitiable. The Keeper of the Seals was very little attacked in this memorial, but the cardinal much. Some wise-heads pretended that the Keeper of the Seals was in some way in concert with the cabal, the object of which was to disgust the cardinal and force him to retire. But the Keeper of the Seals had been accused of the same thing several times, whether by exciting troubles in parliament or by bringing on the late war, in order to stir up events that would trouble and disgust the cardinal and force him to resign.

It must always be remarked that the Keeper of the Seals, from a certain point of view, holds firmer in place than the cardinal; for the latter, at the first sign of dislike on the part of the king, would retire to Issy to learn how to die, and delay the moment of it; but the former will bear all, is supple, has a strong back, and needs cannon to force him to retreat.

M. Chauvelin had won over a number of the little rousés among the "Marmousets;" he used the occasion of the last war to push their fortunes. The Comte de B—— made rapid strides through his assistance, and others of that company are devoted to him. But further than that: the king having a desire for some other woman than the queen, they fixed on Mme. de Mailly. After many false rumours about it, they are now founded and realized. Mlle. de Charolais was the first to pander to it by the convenience of her house, "Madrid," in the Bois de Boulogne and close to "La Muette," where the king sups often. It has happened that in riding out myself, on horseback, early in the morning, I have seen fresh wheel-marks in certain narrow roads leading from "La

Muette" to "Madrid" which are always kept barred and locked. But since the great affair has been consummated Mademoiselle is no longer anything and the two lovers conduct their own affairs for themselves.

The Keeper of the Seals, having known of the progress of this affair, has become the sole counsellor of the Mailly. After the second meeting she spoke to the king of her poverty, which is great; he gave her, liberally, forty louis which he had in his pocket; then a second liberality; but the third time he told her he had nothing at his disposal but the money of his privy purse, and on that he had more claims than it could pay; we know well that whoever calls himself Bourbon is mean. This made trouble between the lovers.

That is where M. Chauvelin awaited them; he had the king told by Mme. de Mailly that the Keeper of the Seals was a very able man, who agreed to make Mme. de Mailly's fortune without its being known by the cardinal or the other ministers; that he had the means through his department of foreign affairs, inasmuch as the accounts and funds passed through his hands, either for gifts, or for secret service; and to give the whole thing an air of regularity, he would supply the lady with forty louis for every rendezvous, so that the total might be expected to amount to a hundred thousand francs a year. M. Chauvelin obtained two advantages in this way: first, the confidence of the king and the necessity he became to him; and secondly, by this advance of the secret funds he explained to his Majesty the accusations beginning to be made against him of levying assessments on foreign gifts, of robbery and misappropriations, etc., so that the king could reply to the cardinal's charges, "I know about that."

The question now is, therefore, to know what passes in

the conversations of the king with the cardinal on the subject of the Keeper of the Seals. Will the king resist little or be firm? Does he like M. Chauvelin as they say he does? Will the cardinal put the game in his hands and resign? Does the king dread the cardinal's virtue? Up to what point does he love him for himself? Will the monarch who allowed the first companions of his pleasures, d'Épernon, La Trémouille, de Gesvres, to be exiled, who granted so little influence to the queen, do more for his mistress? Will he, or will he not listen to the public talk against the Keeper of the Seals? Will the universal distrust of the latter and the hatred of all foreigners be overlooked by him because he prefers vice to virtue? If the Keeper of the Seals carries the day in this manœuvre he becomes absolute master; meantime no one should stake upon it.

[February 20, 1737.] Dismissal of the Keeper of the Seals, who is exiled to Bourges. It would be boastfulness to say, as all writers of memoirs do, that I foresaw the disgrace of M. Chauvelin; but it is true that I had predicted to him something of the kind, and that in the political memoranda which I made for myself I announced it as inevitable, and gave my reasons, which have proved the true ones.

The populace and everybody else have said a hundred things about it, which have not common-sense. The truth is this: M. Chauvelin is more frank than people think; he does not conceal his dislikes and his contempts, and many persons have been unnecessarily known to stand ill on his records. His auxiliary relation to the prime-minister set all the other ministers against him. He took upon himself the refusals, and left to the cardinal the honour and credit of the benefits and favours. He carried himself in imagination to the days when he should govern alone, and he wanted that things should go forward on the footing he expected to give

to them. It must be granted, as to this, that his thoughts had too much elevation and grandeur for the good of the State; he would have liked to shake Europe as other great ministers have done; they accuse him of resembling M. de Louvois, whose relation he is.

All this leads me to see that there is no great harm in his being no longer our minister; for I like none but the bourgeois policy that makes us live well with our foreign neighbours and be only their umpire, in order that we may work, once for all and consistently, to perfect the interior of the kingdom, and to render all Frenchmen happy.

The Court has been much mistaken in disliking M. Chauvelin; he has been *more favourable to the aristocracy than any other minister*. Cardinal de Fleury's nature is exactly the contrary to that of his late auxiliary. M. Chauvelin embarked him on three enterprises: the Swiss treaty; the affair of the parliament; and the last war. Hardly has his Eminence embarked on any project, no matter what passion incites him, when a chill supervenes, and the anxiety to get out of the affair becomes another passion within him.

They accuse M. Chauvelin of that old policy for which Cardinal de Richelieu was so often blamed, namely: that of tangling affairs expressly to make himself necessary and kill Cardinal de Fleury with disgusts. But I am certain that in this he only followed the bent of his own strong and impetuous nature. In this way all the evil has been laid to his account and the Court has made him a scapegoat. As for foreigners, it is easy to understand the war they have made upon him, so that all Europe, except Spain, has been against him, and in concluding the peace they were unwilling to negotiate with him [preliminary treaty of Vienna, 1735]. Without having been present, I can well believe that he made important remonstrances to the cardinal against

the species of peace which his Eminence patched up, and which has been so strongly criticised; but, for my part, I think it intrinsically good because of three things: (1) we have peace and its fruits; (2) we acquire Lorraine; (3) Don Carlos is removed to the extremity of Italy.

But I cannot help regretting that so fine an opportunity [Treaty of Vienna] was lost to drive the Emperors of Germany forever out of Italy. It could assuredly have been done then, and all Europe would have been with us, if, acting with candour, we had strengthened the third party with the spoils of the House of Austria in Italy, without in any way making them over to the Bourbons. It was only necessary to make this resolution understood at Madrid by some firm envoy, who should say distinctly: "Do you insist on all, or nothing?—Do you want to give Don Carlos the Two Sicilies, or form a general league against Spain and the Emperor?" What better time could there be than this to make Italy flourishing and exclude her forever from all wars?

I have shown this in my project for pacification written in July, 1735.

His Eminence must answer before God for having missed this opportunity, the rise of which cost us so much blood, and, possibly, the exhaustion of our star.

With regard to the affairs of the Court, what happened? The king, after slightly resisting in M. Chauvelin's favour, acknowledged all to the cardinal, and his Eminence said: "That is the man who only existed, as he said, by me! He has made himself supporters on all sides, and of whom? Of my enemies, if I have any." One discovery led to a score of others. No sooner had his Eminence opened the door to the enemies of the Keeper of the Seals than they all filed in and overwhelmed him.

This disgrace was publicly determined two months before

it was consummated, and nothing of the kind was ever more novel. M. Chauvelin was resolved not to retire of his own accord, but to await the blow; and this course gave him an air of innocence and firmness. At last, on the 20th of February, 1737, they asked him to return the Seals and dismiss his two ministers; and they suppressed the office of Keeper of the Seals.

M. Amelot succeeded him the same day in the ministry of Foreign Affairs; a man of no experience, nor trained to administration, but whom they believed of the right stuff to acquire it, and virtuous. As he was talked of before his appointment, the cardinal was enlightened about his defects, but he was eagerly demanded by the other ministers, and the cardinal took him for what he was.

III.

1737 — 1738.

I NEVER doubted that the Seals would be returned to the chancellor, but the ministry of Foreign Affairs remained for solicitation. I did not solicit, but my friends did for me. What chiefly occupied my mind at first, was to have nothing to reproach myself with that looked like applauding or seeking to profit by the misfortune of my friend. On that I have not only the testimony of my conscience, but that of M. Chauvelin himself. The poor man writes me that one of his consolations is that I am known at present for what I am worth.

I am worth but little, but I burn with ardour for the welfare of my fellow-citizens; and if that were really known, certainly they would want me in office. My friends and even I myself believed that I should be secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; I saw no competitor, so to speak, however little right I had to pretend to the office. A legal man was needed, according to present custom; I am, moreover, a man of condition; my father served the king well, and had been a great officer of the crown; and I have studied political affairs assiduously for the last seven years. The cardinal knows this, for he has read my memorials. M. Chauvelin testified to him of me at all times. His Eminence boasts of me to every one, and has proposed to me a delicate embassy. These were reasons, surely, if not rights at this conjuncture. I may add also, from the rumours that flew about, that the public would have applauded the appointment on all sides.

I was the first to come into the cardinal's mind, and it was long decided in my favour. His best friends let me know that they had spoken for me, but I did not ask any one to do so. Finally appeared M. Amelot de Chaillou, intendant of finance, having the department of subsidies in charge, and never having read the "Gazette," as he told me himself.

I was very eager to know what they had to say against me; it reduced itself to this: that I belonged through my brother to the party of the princes and seigneurs; for my brother, who has the mania of ambition, got himself recommended by all the great people, failed himself, and then caused me to fail, so that I appeared to be that which I was not at all. For I never saw any of those people. It is fifteen years since I last went to see the Comte de Toulouse, and six months since I have seen the Maréchal de Noailles. I do not know why his Eminence did not reject that argument. However, a brother is always a brother, they say; though I do not intrigue, I must let myself be injured by some one as intriguing as he.

M. Amelot de Chaillou should not be painted as an isolated man; he is not that at all, for he works underground like a mole, and no one is more eager to succeed.

[March, 1737.] My brother has flung himself headlong into the party of the Molinists, Jesuits, or doctors of divinity and devotees of the Jesuits, like the Duchesse de Gontaut and her mother the Maréchale de Gramont. Those people are always crying out hypocritically to the cardinal: "Ah! religion is ruined, Monseigneur; what will become of us?" And all this solely to exclude some and serve others. Though the chancellor [d'Aguesseau] bent the knee to the golden calf, *id est* the bull Unigenitus, his family did not, and are now being brought up on Jansenist principles. This has made his Eminence fear to leave the two administra-

tions in the hands of that family, and my brother has been proposed to him as alone capable of being a little Keeper of the Seals.

Oh! how unfortunate I am to have a brother who thinks only of himself;—who wants for himself only, and who in everything is the centre of his circle! Such a passion excludes virtue and that love of the public good which we ought to adore after our mere happiness and far before our own grandeur—for what folly is grandeur and the thirst to command! That is how conquerors seize upon provinces only to devastate them, govern them badly, and destroy their own lives as well as those of others.

So here is my brother, frantic to succeed, *acheronta movebo*. He wants every one, mistress, friends, brother, to serve him as stepping-stones; and too lucky shall I be if some advancement for me does not fall in the way of one of his passions—the result of selfishness, the particular passion of which is envy. He will no doubt prostitute himself to the Molinists, and by that means get himself inveighed against by the Jansenists, who soon dishonour you before the public in their “*Gazette Ecclésiastique*.”

[End of March, 1737.] There has been a great rumour, first in Paris, then at Court (which shows there is some foundation for it), that the Duc d’Orléans [son of the regent] is to be put at the head of affairs. At first I could not believe it; but I see great appearances of it, though this proposed object be only a delusion; but circumstances alter rules. What a sight that of a king twenty-seven years old willing to give himself for master or guardian a prince of thirty-three, only six years his elder, who has no more experience of the world than himself, and even less, for the king has at least lived with men, while the Duc d’Orléans has lived with books, ascetic and dogmatic books, and is, more-

over, neither a soldier, nor a statesman, but a man of ordinary capacity, and in small ways.

He is, nevertheless, a good man; being a saint, he can have none but good intentions; people will be made to believe that it is only a question of making an idol of royalty, of enabling it to give from time to time a stroke of the tiller, of holding the ministers in equilibrium when any of them emerge from equality; in a word, to serve the king as chief counsellor, as Cardinal de Fleury ought to serve him. But great strokes of the tiller have passed in these days from grand things to details. This argument was made to me the other day by my brother, who got it from Cardinal Dubois.

They will make the king believe that saintliness will bring a blessing into public affairs and acclamation from the people; and that this saintliness makes the Duc d'Orléans a great man beyond his natural capacity, and therefore that the king does not lower himself in submitting to him. It is true that the public, especially the lower classes, will applaud it; and, in truth, virtue cannot be brought too closely to the throne. The cardinal would have reason to like it; he could rest a little; less at first, more later, and say his *Nunc dimittis*. This scheme would produce at first a worthy, sober government, but never a very fortunate one, for want of ability and expedients. A prince like the Duc d'Orléans will either govern by himself, and then incompetence, uncertainty, hesitation, and pettiness everywhere; or he will yield to his courtiers, and then a reign of hypocrites and ambitious men, petty in all things, but bad in many, inquisition, gloom, languor, vile passions of envy and malignity, whited sepulchre, pattern without, corruption within.

And yet, this Duc d'Orléans is a man *who wills*; he decides, he has a will of his own; which distinguishes the man

of action from the useful man more than does the stuff of his mind and spirit; men of much mind and great acquirements, if undecided, or not having will enough of their own, are null in the world and above all in offices; whereas the man who *wills* reigns. M. le Duc [de Bourbon] did not *will*; the king *wills* less, and *would rather will* never; the cardinal *wills* often and reigns by it.

A union of the cardinal and the Duc d'Orléans would make a pretty good combination; but the new ministers are not of the fashion of the Duc d'Orléans; he would certainly want to put in his chancellor, M. d'Orry, on the first occasion. As for me, who am brother-in-law of that chancellor, I have the prospect of never being anything, for I am pronounced in my views; and I shall always pronounce myself as liking better to be nothing than to be something creeping and intriguing. I have ideas enough to aim at the great good of a special object without deferring in any way to intrigue; by this I should become too dangerous to cabals, either with the king or with a virtuous prince like the Duc d'Orléans. They would get me away no doubt on embassies; I expect that.

[April] Mme. Amelot has been to see our princesses; they asked her when she was coming to Versailles; to which she answered that she wished she could say, but she had so many things to do; she had to furnish her house at Versailles, then at Fontainebleau, at Marly, and at Compiègne. The princesses looked at each other, thinking it very bourgeois; Mlle. de Charolais remarked: "It is not surprising; she is the upholsterer in the Marais."

[April 14.] Cardinal de Fleury told me to-day that a week from to-morrow, that is, Tuesday, 21st, my appointment as ambassador to Portugal would be announced and that I must be at Versailles by Monday evening.

[April 28.] This has been a great day for me ; the king appointed me as his ambassador to Portugal. This is how it took place.

I went to the *lever* of his Eminence the cardinal, who told me that the king had something to say to me. After the king's mass and just before the Council, his Majesty advanced towards me, and did me the honour to say : " Monsieur, I have made choice of you to be my ambassador in Portugal." I made a profound bow, and said : " Sire, I shall make every effort to justify the confidence your Majesty has placed in me." The cardinal added that I was already prepared by the work I had done to fit myself for that employment.

All the courtiers congratulated me. I consulted those whom I thought well-informed as to the visits I ought to pay ; and in consequence, I have been to see the princes and the ministers.

The queen was alone ; she said she would give me some commissions for Portugal, trifles of the country that pleased her. The dauphin received me very prettily, and said : " Monsieur, I am convinced that the king could not have made a better choice." Then I went to the Duc d'Orléans, who surprised me by saying that my appointment was news to him.

My sole intention, in accepting the employment which the king has just conferred upon me, is to render myself worthy and put myself within reach of some office in the ministry, to which my seniority in the Council would naturally raise me if I do not cease to deserve it ; how much more, therefore, if I show merit and courage. Having been for five years intendant on the frontiers, with sufficient approval, then fourteen years in the Council, always assiduous and with a good reputation for integrity, if, after joining

to these things a knowledge of foreign countries and of negotiations, I obtain a place in the ministry, no one can say of me that I am promoted like so many others, and I can sustain myself in it more easily by justice and right than by favour.

[July.] News has come that the King of England has suddenly ordered the Venetian minister to leave his kingdom, because the son of the Pretender, travelling in Italy, has been received at the college of Venice with distinguished honours, such as not taking off his sword or his hat, which marks, they say, the sovereign prince. It is thought that this step on the part of the English government is a heedless one, because the Venetians have not a penny's worth of goods in England, whereas the English have a great commerce in Venice and the gulf. The English consul will be driven from Venice with all the vice-consuls of the Venetian States, and they may seize the effects of the English for this marked and little deserved affront. What will the English government do about it? Will it send a fleet of fifty vessels to the gulf? If there is talk in England of the harm this does to commerce, and of all this fresh expense, then the Jacobites will have a fine pretext to act for their true passion, covering it with the interests of commerce.

When they came to announce to the king the birth of a seventh daughter, instead of a Duc d'Anjou as he expected, they asked him if they should call her "Madame Septième," to which he replied, "No, Madame Dernière." Hence it is concluded that the queen will be neglected in future.

A subject of political speculation: The Grand-duke of Tuscany has just died; Spain is advancing her troops towards Catalonia; Don Carlos, King of Naples, has just pardoned his rebellious subjects; couriers are trotting every-

where; the Emperor is busy in Hungary; the Venetians are arming without saying why — with what object? The King of Sardinia has not discharged a man, but has recruited and bought Swiss soldiers; our controller-general is working continually with his Eminence, and I know that certain sums he had promised for commerce have now been withdrawn. To what does all this point? League between Spain, the King of Sardinia, Venice, the Elector of Bavaria (who has just been travelling in Italy and has promised his troops to the Venetians) — all this with a view of driving the Emperor for the second time out of Italy. We can pull a few chestnuts and get Savoie; in which case we quarrel with the Emperor, Portugal, and England, but without giving them a chance against us. The occasion should be seized to make ourselves armed umpires.

Eh quoi! is Italian courage crushed to the point that there is no man in Florence or Padua who has the heart to rise to recover his liberty, and bring about a republic? Spain would help the revolt under pretext of the freehold lands [*des allodiaux*]. Venice, the King of Sardinia, and the King of Naples would join forces to drive the Emperor from Italy for all time. Venice and Sardinia would divide Lombardy between them and thus the freed Italian genius would be brought within compass of sustaining itself alone, safe from the two great ambitious Houses of Austria and the Bourbons. I am convinced that it depends only on Spain to form this league and maintain it; provided all possible good faith is observed. But if she wants to put the world on her side in driving out her enemy, she must not seek to gain the spoils for herself. In this case, should we not do well to remain neuter? The Emperor is more occupied than ever in Hungary. What a fine and opportune occasion!

The Sieur Bachelier, first *valet de chambre* to the king, is a philosopher content with his fortune, which is good ; he has 50,000 francs from *rentes*, a house in the country, and a mistress ; he loves his master, is beloved by him, and desires the good of the State. Men of this stamp are difficult to displace ; this is just what makes the strength of the cardinal ; happily for France, the king likes men of this species. It is true that Bachelier is what is called a pimp ; but it goes with his trade, as killing goes with that of a soldier. Perhaps he can persuade the king to keep to one mistress as he has so far done with the little Mailly, and to give her only moderate and suitable gifts. Bachelier is faithful to his master, as much so perhaps as the cardinal. To this he adds intelligence, views, firmness, philosophy, and, above all, a love for the State, all of which in a man without birth or family produces satiety of his own prosperity, and fixes his ideas by concentrating them on the public good embodied in the person of the king.

The cardinal, whose ideas for the good of the State are fixed, followed a course of conduct which the Court intriguers took for great shrewdness, ability, and sublime policy, whereas it was derived wholly from that love of the State which never loses its one object from sight. His Eminence may have feared Bachelier's favour at first, not from jealousy but for the things of his trade ; but later his Eminence, considering that sooner or later the king would have a mistress, and consequently a Mercury and a confidential valet (the preceding kings had their Fouquet-la-Varenne, Beringhen, and Bontemps), his Eminence preferred Bachelier to any other as soon as he found him a philosopher and an honest man. His Eminence therefore approved the choice and became himself attached to Bachelier.

Cardinal de Fleury practises a sort of spying over the

ambassadors of foreign countries which our courtiers think extremely clever. His ministers of the second class are the spies; such men manage to learn much and tell it readily. They frequent the ambassadors in the pretended interests of their several masters, and by comparing one with the others they learn the whole. His Eminence caresses these little ministers. There is not one of them that does not believe himself the special friend of the minister; he treats them familiarly, tells them scraps of the secrets of great courts, and even of ours; after which they boast in private of making great progress.

The year 1737 has been very singular as to weather; the end of the winter and the beginning of the spring were unusually fine and very warm; then came frosts which ruined the best vineyards on the Loire. Nevertheless, the harvest, and especially the vintage, promised unparalleled abundance; but when the dog-days came we had an actual winter, fires every day, rain continually, bad roads, severe cold, and this lasted into September; and the fine vintage promised to men was only a take-in, all was verjuice. And this is the fourth vintage that has proved a failure in France.

At the present time ambassadors are selected by their faces, according as they offer analogies with the nations to whom they are sent. This summer three such were appointed at the same time: I to Lisbon because I am said to have a Portuguese air; M. de Saint-Séverin to Sweden, because he has the stern and pallid look of a Swede; and Courtois to Switzerland, for it is true that he really has the Swiss countenance.

[November, 1737.] During the Court's stay at Fontainebleau, there has been a rush of people, a mysterious affluence, greater even than in the days of the late king; and this is

attributed to the following causes: first, it is believed that Mme. de Mailly is to be openly declared the king's mistress; it is not doubted that she is so in fact. Our greatest princes of the blood have taken possession of her; they give her the place of honour in their carriages when they hunt; and they foretell other grandeurs for her, which the cardinal withholds and will withhold as long as his ministry lasts. The highest courtiers have flocked to Court for this reason; persons greedy for false grandeur; they all believe that this elevation of a mistress will have an influence on the government, and produce changes which each believes, chimerically, will be advantageous to himself.

Besides this, many financiers have hurried to Fontainebleau for the renewal of the leases of the *fermes générales*; each believing there will be great changes and hoping to gain a share in them. But there has not been any change, unless it be an increase of three millions five hundred thousand *livres* demanded from the former incumbents.

[1738.] There is talk about M. de Maurepas becoming prime-minister, or rather, holding that office without the title, having thereby the chief management of affairs. It is thought that the cardinal draws to his end; he is ill of a decline; he abstains almost entirely from work. But the king is now beginning to take upon himself to decide; he shows intelligence and capacity; he has put many things in his pouch during the period of his timidity. Unfortunately for M. de Maurepas, his Majesty is informed of the too vast views of the said Maurepas, and this joined to other defects, keeps him from the desired end. Now, the king will either govern the kingdom himself after the death of the cardinal, or he will abandon himself to laziness. In the latter event we must have a stronger head than that of M. de Maurepas. If the king himself governs, everything will depend on his

choosing ministers of sincerity and holding them in equilibrium. Thus he ought to guard himself from ever permitting that subordination of order, of creation, of rank, and advancement from one to the other which M. de Maurepas aims to establish.

The Cardinal d'Auvergne, being at the supper of Mgr. the dauphin, they did him the honour to invite him to say the prayer; on attempting to do so, he found he knew his *Pater* badly, very little of the *Ave*, and mixed up the *Credo* with the *Confiteor*, showing that he was not in the habit of saying such ordinary prayers as those. People laughed about it; but what a horror that a prelate so richly paid should thus have broken from his duties as a Christian.

The king works at present with his ministers, acquits himself well, and decides with judgment; he has a well-stored memory for details and for locality; more than that, he shows great humanity and justice. People ask whether he will continue to work, and if what he is now doing since the cardinal's illness is not the fervour of a young priest. The answer made is that we must consider that the king is almost without passions and has no dominant taste; it is those who are carried away by tastes for music, hunting, the table, women, pleasures, and even idleness (which is a taste), — it is they, I say, who are distracted from work and feel repugnance to it. Apathy, on the contrary, leaves in men a void which must be filled. The care of public affairs is brought to kings stripped of its thorns; their ministers come to them with business cleared of all incumbrance, and about which they have only a yes or a no to pronounce. This is enough to fill that void and yet demand no efforts on the part of his Majesty. Besides this, the king loves economy; conservation rather than acquisition, a turn of mind that I like much in government. The king is kind, he is shrewd, he is

sovereignly discreet; he is the son of a father and mother who both had much intelligence; that of his maternal grandmother was only too extended; he says things with tact, as I have observed; he listens to everything, even the smallest details. He has a robust mind on the side of memory for locality, personality, and facts; the operation of his mind is quick as lightning; it is true that he goes but little to the bottom of things, so far, never lending himself to a long discussion. They accuse him of laziness and want of feeling; he shows himself a natural worker by the various tastes he takes up, though without affection for them; thus he works of himself and not by effort, which is good. As for his sensibility, he showed it during the illness of the dauphin, and that of the cardinal. He has long had his system of amusing himself and relying upon the cardinal as long as he lives to govern the kingdom, knowing his integrity, and having a high opinion of his capacity; but after that he intends to govern himself; we shall see if he keeps his word; at any rate, he understands men, and he likes honest ones. See his choice of the cardinal, and among the valets, the *Sieur Bachelier*, who has firmness, judgment, and integrity. His young favourites are *MM. de Soubise* and *de Coigny*, both worthy lads. All this promises a fortunate reign; God keep it so! It is this soul, therefore, that we must seek to please, and not the villanous subjects becoming kings who have all the passions of envy, pride, and malevolence.

The queen likes to play *lansquenet* on Sundays, and usually no players appear. It is preposterous how little alacrity and civility there is among the courtiers. People are becoming republican even at Court; they are getting disabused of all respect for royalty; they measure their attentions too much by their wants and power to supply them. The queen was walking up and down, waiting; there were

but two ladies in her room, the Comte de Noailles, and myself,—desertion of even her ladies! The queen said: "They pretend it is I who will not play lansquenet, or begin early; you see how fine it is to say that *I* won't, when it is *they* who won't. I was thinking about it just now, and even, I admit, during the sermon." Mme. de Boufflers remarked that it was that which had brought her ill-luck. I said, "Perhaps the sermon was on gambling." The queen replied, "No, it was on evil-speaking." "Precisely, Madame," I said; "when they preach against evil-speaking, it is as good as exhorting to play cards; for while we are playing we can't backbite." The queen answered, very brightly, "Then should preachers against cards exhort to backbiting?" Her Majesty proposed that I should play; I said I would obey her; but she had the kindness to add immediately: "No, I remember that you do not usually play; and besides," she added, laughing, "you need all your money for your embassy."

[May, 1738.] England is going to quarrel with Spain for the captures which the Spaniards are continually making in America of English vessels. The English call this "Spanish depredations," and the Spaniards call it righteous defence against English smuggling in Spanish colonies. It is true that, under pretext of "permitted vessels" in the South Sea [vessels of 500 tons], England is continually pouring merchandise into the Spanish colonies. Sometimes the excuse is a vessel short of water, or the rigging out of order, or the winds were contrary, until at last the Spaniards have made a rule, of their own authority and against all maritime laws, that every English vessel found within ten leagues of the coast shall be captured.

We offered our mediation, but what good is that without arms to enforce our words? We need a navy to reach an honest settlement, without which Spain will succumb under

the great maritime power of England and the English will usurp all the commerce and wealth of the world. Besides their maritime forces, the English are very prosperous in their colonies, where they swarm like ants; whereas the Spaniards are getting more and more dilapidated in theirs. To all this, I keep saying the same thing: *We need a navy*. When I hear it said in public that M. de Maurepas has great influence at Court and will govern it, I should like to see that the first fruit of his favour was the restoration of the navy; I think, on the contrary, it is diminishing; this year we have only two or three frigates at sea, whereas last year we had squadrons; but M. de Maurepas assures me that I shall see, this coming year, a squadron of fourteen or fifteen large French war-ships in the Lisbon River.

It really seems as if we turned our backs on the opportunities that come to us, so governed are we by little minds! And what nation is it of which this is true?—a nation which ought to have men of the first order at her head.

On the other hand, that crazy Spain is about, they say, to form a triple alliance to go and invade Italy while the Emperor is hampered with the Turks. It is also said that the latter has asked us, in virtue of our treaties with him, for troops to guard his Italy; and that the succour we have sent to Corsica is only a blind to reconnoitre this ridiculous step. The triple alliance will consist, they say, of Savoie, Naples, and Spain (father and son), and Sardinia, a son known to live on a father's alms; fine forces indeed! And what will be the upshot? Spain had much better think of herself, pay her officers, mend her shattered finances, and, above all, keep Lisbon opulent, her useful colonies in America, and lower the tyrannical ambition of English commerce.

What are we doing in all this? I ask. What measures have we taken? What forts have we? Foiled in our arbitration of Juliers, alarmed by the King of Prussia, stopped in our projects at the North, Sweden and Denmark deceived, how great is our need at this moment of a Cardinal Richelieu, firm and effectual, or at least of a Chauvelin — a man, in short!

[May 11.] I was to-day at the cardinal's *lever*, where there was talk of the printing of books, which is very bad in Paris; it was said that the proper expedient was to take away licenses, and to grant none except for new books and those on which the publishers risked their money; but that for well-known books, bought by every one, the trade should be open, — such as "Don Quixote," Racine, Molière, etc.; to which I added: "History of Henri IV.," by Péréfixe, the "Discourse on Universal History," by M. de Meaux [Bossuet], and *Télémaque*. The cardinal said: "M. d'Argenson makes me observe that all the preceptors of kings and dauphins have for the last century written books, and good books; whereas I . . ." I interrupted him by saying: "Monseigneur, you put into example what the others have put into precepts; facts are always more convincing than words." The flattery succeeded.

[June 1.] Sunday, June 1, I went to see M. d'Acunha [Portuguese ambassador]. Mendez followed me as soon as he knew I was there, and we had a conversation of two hours. Speaking with him of my salary, he said I was well off, inasmuch as it was running. I replied that it ran so well I could not catch it. Mendez [sub-minister of Foreign Affairs in Portugal] said that the controller-general had assured him I was paid regularly by the quarter. I answered that no doubt the controller was better informed on other parts of the finances than on

this.¹ On which Mendez said, jesting: "Monsieur, I have influence; how much will you give me? I will have you paid." I answered seriously: "Monsieur, all for the good of the service, nothing for mine."

[June 9.] I have been to see M. Amelot, with whom I had an appointment this morning at ten o'clock. He told me he had spoken the evening before to his Eminence about my departure, saying that I had asked for a few days in which to reflect. The cardinal answered, "He does well to reflect."

I told M. Amelot that these reflections had led me more and more to see that they were treating me unworthily, which I did not deserve, and (if I might say a foolish thing) as they ought not to treat *a man like me*; and, for that reason, I requested him to convey to his Eminence, with all the civility and circumspection of which I was capable, my refusal to go upon this embassy, after waiting so long for orders to proceed to my post.

As for the rest, I offered to return what I had received for it; though that was hardly just, because by my functions as Councillor of State I was not obliged to hire a palace in Lisbon for two years, and support pages, equerries, secretaries, etc., as I had done. M. Amelot tried to argue on various quibbles and said very pitiful things. Finally, to end it, I said to him: "Monsieur, I am doing only what you would do in my place,—you who are so wise." He replied: "Monsieur, that would be according to the state of my affairs." "Ah! monsieur," I retorted, with some heat, "I will bet against all that there is not a more limited com-

¹ D'Argenson says elsewhere that he considers he had right to an indemnity, having spent ninety-seven thousand francs uselessly in preparations for his embassy. Instead of which they had withdrawn fifteen thousand francs from his salary.—FR. ED.

petence than mine. I glory in it, after the offices my father filled and the economy with which I have lived ; it will become much more limited through this affair ; but I shall know how to attend the Council on foot." He seemed touched, and said he would write me the decision.

[July.] When a prime-minister finds a party formed beside him which resists him at Court, if he cannot destroy it he is himself overthrown, and while awaiting that result he can only languish. That was how M. le Duc viewed his approaching fall when M. de Fréjus succeeded him ; and also how the latter, now Cardinal de Fleury, must see in the party of Bachelier and Mme. de Mailly that which precedes his overthrow. This party of the valet and the mistress has strengthened itself and has behaved and still behaves with great ability.

Bourges directs it, but it depends on M. le Duc and his whole family. What that family [of Condé] chiefly holds to is its hatred of the House of Orléans and of all the legitimatized princes. The satisfaction of that hatred can alone content them. M. le Duc does not care to bring himself nearer the throne. If the dauphin were to die, he would call with all his might for the Spanish branch rather than let that of Orléans reign. He begins to feel easy about the bastards ; MM. de Dombes and d'Eu [sons of the Duc du Maine] do not marry, being wise, considerate, and little ambitious. Moreover, M. le Duc likes the attentions shown to him by the king, who often visits him at Chantilly on his way to and from Compiègne. He occupies his place at the Council for the sole reason that the Duc d'Orléans occupies his.

On the last journey to Compiègne (which still continues) the cardinal seems to have been despised and scouted by all the courtiers. When he enters the circle nothing

is said to him, and everybody is silent; the moment his heels are turned there is loud laughter, and the contagion of such manners is quickly taken; the courtiers no longer restrain themselves. No one now goes to him in the mornings with an account of what the king has been doing the night before. The young courtiers even venture to say aloud to his Majesty: "When will you be rid of your old tutor? Are not you of an age to govern yourself? The late king began at twenty-one; your Majesty is twenty-eight. It is true he let Cardinal Mazarin end first; but that cardinal had the kindness to end in good time, while this one is endless and in his dotage."

As for me, who seek always to judge soberly of the men who govern us, I say to those who see all this in black for the cardinal, that I cannot believe him so changed since his decay in health as to become either mad or wicked. He has ever shown himself the contrary of all that up to this time; he took part in public affairs against his will; and he has never been impatient to advance his family. He loves the king and the State; if he persists in still governing it is because he believes the conduct of affairs already begun needs his supervision for some time longer.

It seems to be believed that the king will take a liking to work; already he likes papers, study, reading, and even to write with his own hand notes after the manner of M. Chauvelin, who first inspired him to do so. He has had closets made in a private cabinet, and there his papers are arranged in careful order and ticketed in his own handwriting; he makes lists of everything, — products, weights, expedients, means, plans. Let us believe that nothing can better prove a taste for work, and an inclination to occupy himself with public affairs, than these trifles.

The best minds at Court think that the approaching death

of Cardinal de Fleury will not at first bring about great changes in the ministry. Of the six ministers now in office we must put aside the chancellor [d'Aguesseau] and M. de Saint-Florentin, who have only a small share in great affairs, not being ministers with departments; but the four others govern all, to wit: MM. de Maurepas, Amelot, Orry, and d'Angervilliers.

M. de Maurepas is the elder; he is more a man of the Court, more experience, better birth, more familiar with the king; the others regard him as a protector. He supported M. d'Angervilliers against M. Chauvelin. M. d'Angervilliers is on the descent to ruin and is ridiculed at Court; M. Amelot is a little fellow of small mind, no friends, a creature of Maurepas, and placed in office by him. M. de Maurepas being their elder, it will be proposed to his Majesty that the four ministers should assemble at his house twice a week, as they do at the cardinal's at present, and that State matters should be settled there and the result taken to his Majesty all cooked. He will find this sweet and tranquil; he will go a-hunting and waste his time on his usual frivolities; they will put him to sleep in the flattering delusion that all is going on as well as in the days of his great-grandfather; this scheme seems very pretty to the four little ministers. Things may really go fairly well if they choose, but feebly. M. de Maurepas has none but common ideas, little head, indiscreet, talker, laughers; some perception, little meditation, or rather none; a true courtier, a coxcomb, and moreover impotent, which reacts on public business. He may soon be master of affairs. As for the poor Duc d'Orléans, *ne verbum quidem* that the ball will ever go to him.

Bachelier is strongly against M. de Maurepas; not that there is any intention of removing him from the naval

department, where he does well, but because of his disaffection and injurious action against M. Chauvelin; for with all his cleverness in making others pull the chestnuts from the fire, it was plainly seen that it was he who placed his henchman M. Amelot in the ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[August, 1738.] At the beginning of this month the rumour was great in Paris that the Duc d'Orléans was about to govern the kingdom by the retirement and the advice of Cardinal de Fleury, or by his death, which was thought impending, seeing his great age and the extreme weakness that constantly seizes him. It was also said that M. d'Argenson, the chancellor of the Duc d'Orléans' appanage, would have a great part in the administration.

There are many things to say against the truth of this rumour. In the first place, as to the king, it would be taking out letters of imbecility. What! at his age—twenty-eight years old—to put himself under tutelage! And to whom? To a cousin only five or six years older than himself; a worthy man, it is true, but a rabid pietist and misanthrope, who has never studied anything but theology, does not know men, and has never paid attention to public affairs. M. le Duc will make furious opposition to this arrangement; he will mutiny,—he, and his whole family and party.

The reasons for it are: that the king is facile; that he lets himself be persuaded in everything by the cardinal; that the latter fully intended placing at the head of affairs the Comte de Toulouse [Louis XIV.'s son]; and it would have been arranged, for this bastard had talents and the friendship of the king, when he suddenly died; that the king is giving himself up once more to indolence, to pleasures, excursions, and all that distracts from work; that he wants an honest man to relieve him of it, and where can he

find a better than this saintly prince? that the latter is to be named only chief of the Council, which he is already, and the ministers will transact business with him instead of going with everything to the cardinal; in short, that this is a piece of good policy, as much in regard to parties at Court, which it will repress (especially that of the house of Condé), as with regard to external affairs,—the king having no heir but the dauphin, and the queen being soon past age to have children, yet without its being possible to repudiate her either for morals or sterility, like Queen Marguerite. Then would come the claims of the Spanish branch, which is now courted more than it has ever been since the king's childhood. All foreigners in consequence distrust our alliance. What could be wiser, then, than a complete adoption of the house of Orléans, regarding the Duc d'Orléans and the Duc de Chartres as younger brothers of the dauphin, and admitting them to all the affairs of the kingdom?

What is very sure is that our present ministers, especially the cardinal, are doing their best to bring this about, in the fear they have of the return of M. Chauvelin, about which the king does not declare himself, and there is much appearance that it may take place. On the other hand the Jesuits and all those rabid bullists, true remnant of the Ligue, are working for the same purpose: that is, to deprive M. le Duc of all influence and prevent the return of M. Chauvelin, both of whom they regard as opposed to their cause, and who, in truth, were only justly tolerant, the wise and politic enemies of persecution—which was the sentiment of M. de Thou, the historian, who has been so vehemently accused of being a disguised heretic.

Meantime pressing affairs besiege the kingdom; such as the misery of the provinces, the quarrels in the Church, the ambition of the constitutionalists, the bigotry of parliament,

the dissatisfaction of Spain, the league of the Emperor with Russia, the ambitious commerce of England, her excessive wealth, the shrinkage of our commerce, the quantity of privileges which daily make the weight of their abuse tell upon us. These are the things to which we must find remedies; and the feebleness of our four present ministers can never do so.

The king puts his confidence in Bachelier in all things; after being necessary to him in his secret affairs, such, for instance, as his amours with Mme. de Mailly, and the disposal of the two children whom he is said to have had by her, he now consults him on the affairs of the kingdom, and the ruin that threatens it if he does not make choice after the death of the cardinal, and even during his lifetime, of other men than the present ministers.

The cardinal sees with grief that the morals of the king have escaped him, and that he has his confidence only in affairs of the State. This change in the king's conduct towards him can only be attributed to M. Chauvelin, as to whom the king uses great dissimulation with the cardinal. He listens to the shafts that are aimed against the late Keeper of the Seals and makes no answer, or very little; but there is evidence that he steadily opposes all increase of his exile, such as shutting him up in the castle of Saumur, which his Eminence was so urged to do two months ago. We may, perhaps, feel sure that his Majesty has resolved to recall him on the death of the cardinal, and thus make a total overthrow of the system of government introduced by his Eminence.

The cardinal has no doubt penetrated with his sound good sense the designs of the king as to this change in the ministry. He does not wish to see it in his lifetime; if he merely retired, M. Chauvelin would return to Court triumphant, and

all his poor little favourites would be undone. This is the sole reason now of his persistence in governing in the miserable condition he is now in, almost nonogenarian, the old machine supporting itself solely by elixirs and the "drops" of General Lamothe. It cannot go on much longer; and this last consideration determines the king to let him bury the synagogue with honour. That explains everything.

It has often been a question of my brother for places vacant or likely to become vacant in the ministry; but I doubt if he succeeds otherwise than through a certain consideration which in the end runs to seed and gives a man an air of dismissal without his having been in real favour. His merits consist in much intelligence, but no genius (by intelligence I mean the facility to seize an idea and render it), boldness, courage, tranquillity before great objects, which is taken for strength of soul and is only strength of nerve, a taste for the grand and the lofty as concerns himself; but here is the great defect,—the concentration of all to his own advantage.

Every one has self-love; it is the source and the main-spring of emulation and even of virtue, unhappily for mankind; but we must love ourselves in all honour and not with vile aims, as we love a girl to marry her and not to corrupt her. Thus some love themselves to rise, some to enrich themselves, etc.; it all depends on innate tastes. The question is to have within the heart *beneficence*¹ enough to love others after ourselves; and this second love is what is called *pure love*; a species of love we do wrong to deny, because nearly all of us have it; those who have absolutely none are monsters. Why then did theologians deny it in regard to God on the occasion of M. de Cambrai's [Fénelon's] heresy? God is so kind towards us why should there not be in us

¹ "*Bienfaisance*"; d'Argenson underlines this word, lately created by his friend the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, which he was fond of using. — FR. ED.

some portion of disinterested love for God, over and above the acts that we address to Him in the interests of hope or of fear? Certainly we love the poor when we assist them secretly; we love our mistress beyond the needs of voluptuousness; a good coachman loves his horses beyond the strictness of paid duty; we certainly have the sentiment when we are touched by feeling for some present object, though absence makes that emotion instantly cease within us.

I have laid down these principles to explain what my dear brother is.

He loves himself honourably; he loves his elevation, the highest elevation. Beyond this he loves his race; he has also the sentiment of the moment for his relatives and strangers. These are the only motions of his love; they fill his heart, which has either to be narrow or much occupied with the sentiments I have just mentioned. He is not susceptible of hatred, his bile is never stirred, but he dislikes having equals, and is naturally inclined to sarcasm on his superiors. Hence his mind is equable at all times, for his passions are gentle; his ambition is only a delicate, untrammelled intellectual advance toward the grand, where nothing awes him; from his youth he has been like this. Those who do not know him think that he is eaten up with ambition; no, he is only occupied by it and reflects upon it gaily, because of the opinion he has of his own superiority. He believes he sees the wire of the puppets, he laughs at everything and perpetually attacks in the depths of his thoughts his superiors, though humble, shame-faced and embarrassed in approaching them; but for all that he never unbends with his inferiors, as is the nature of men who are truly generous; on the contrary, he assumes an important, abstracted manner, which imposes on his equals and makes his inferiors respect him.

From all this there results in him but little thirst for justice; and as he never restricts himself in any way, by his easy way of living and the habit of following his fancies he has made himself no principles of morality, justice, or public right; he sees such rules according only to occurrences and the suggestion of each case, which renders his conduct faulty and of little depth, not being guided by the mind. He has never for a moment meditated on the public good; he has always shown indifference to it; he has taken only a few features of it, here and there, from this one and that one; just as I know a few Greek roots that I have picked up I don't know where. Indifference has, unfortunately, caused this ignorance, rather than want of capacity. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that faculty is lacking as well as study and acquirement.

If faculty were there, I would not deny him, as I do, *Genius*, which is *Invention* and Inspiration,—that glorious celestial fire that makes a poet of a cobbler, a general of a labourer like Sforza, and, in statesmanship, a monk into an Ximenez, when the passion of the Good of the monarchy is joined to the genius of the inventor. Then the heart is filled with many other things than self; usually *self* forgets and abandons itself wholly. Thus do men with ardent passions, passions of taste and inquiry, violent loves—like that of Moses for his people; thus do learned men who seek the object of their studies to the visible destruction of themselves.

Without that faculty there can be no statesmen; only mercenary servants; intelligent if you will, but being only in the round of their circle they work solely for what is seen, for what does them honour, for what brings them recompense; all the rest is neglected; and presently a clear-sighted master is disgusted with such servants.

This is what I believe I can say respecting my brother ; such he is absolutely ; and to verify the conjecture by proof we may consider how he has filled three posts, — the intendency of Tours, the police of Paris, and the administration of the household of the Duc d'Orléans.

A just vanity requires me to add that neither my father nor my ancestors were like him. They passed, in their day, for frank, noble, courageous men, worthy of ancient Rome ; above all incapable of Court intrigue, loving a country life after first having distinguished themselves in the world by the brilliancy of their minds and the goodness of their hearts. Nothing can be more proper than to strive to draw to ourselves in the world the same consideration by which our race is known ; we should preserve its qualities as we do its name and its arms.

The foundation of my fortune has for its text these words, which I have already declared to several persons : *There is a calling to follow in which there is an immensity to gain ; it is to be a perfectly honest man.* Joining to that, industry, which must, necessarily, bring some intelligence, it is impossible that a man should not, by degrees, be sought for the highest employments, *for he is needed.*

[September, 1738.] The king is a man of very good sense who, with some laziness about work, nevertheless desires that work shall be well done. He is dissimulating and discreet, as all great kings have been ; he understands men perfectly and naturally, without study or effort, and that is the great science of kings. Had he merely a part of these qualities, which are known, it seems singular that the only man in whom he to-day confides all his affairs should be his *valet de chambre*, Bachelier ; for whatever virtue, merit, and good sense the said Bachelier may possess, it is amazing that this exclusive choice of discussing together at

great length all the affairs of State should have fallen upon him.

But a fact which no one even suspects is that Bachelier is really the agent or the representative of M. Chauvelin beside the person of the king. His Majesty has so carefully concealed this that everybody says (and the cardinal at the head of them) that the king has an unconquerable aversion to M. Chauvelin, that he had never been able to endure him, and other falsehoods by which public silliness is easily made the dupe of the dissimulation of great people.

Bachelier is a steady man, a firm mind inclined to virtue, in which he confirmed himself on seeing that he was called to take the part of confidant to our master. He is rather rich, quite so in income; he has a pretty house between Versailles and Marly, and a mistress whose society pleases him; he desires nothing in the world for himself, but everything for the glory of his master; for that, he listens to all, he seeks to know all; born to little education, he has made himself geographer and politician enough to give him materials for conversing with the king; he talks little, is always thinking, and notes ideas as he finds them. He does not wish to remarry and make himself a race; and this takes from him all design of profiting by his favour to raise himself like the Beringhens and Fouquet-la-Varenne, who came of like origin and favour. Bachelier was wardrobe valet before he became head valet. His father held the latter office, and before that he had been valet to the late M. de La Rochefoucauld.

When Bachelier found himself thus in favour with the king he shut himself within himself and became inaccessible to every one. He admits no one to see him but one or two friends, whom he sends out from his retreat to learn what is going on in the world, with which he informs

the king, thus becoming an antidote to the bulletins which M. Hérault, lieutenant of police, carries to the cardinal. It must not be thought, however, that this rôle and all this favour has not been guided by a more experienced hand in politics, cabinet affairs, the world and the Court than that of this servant. It is, as I have said, M. Chauvelin who, casting his eyes upon this man led him by degrees to his present position.

Between them, they found nothing better to give as mistress to the king, who was seeking practice, than Mme. de Mailly. More pretty than beautiful, when the king took her she was very poor; she is kind, docile, and gay, with a very ordinary mind. The king found in her the ready compliance necessary to overcome his shyness; since then she amuses him, and no affair of the kind has ever been conducted with more mystery and less scandal. Mme. de Mailly is directed by the wise counsels of M. Chauvelin and the valet; she has become reserved; she never meddles in any public matters; she seems to have quarrelled with her family, who are greedy for favour, fortune, and wealth. Bachelier says, with the best faith in the world, that Mme. de Mailly needed only to be relieved from poverty and given some ease in her affairs, and God forbid that good servants of the king should ever allow the renewal of the horrible scandals of the preceding reign: the enthroning of a reigning mistress at Court, the elevation of bastards to the level of princes of the blood, usurping all the great dignities of the State. Certainly such talk is good and fine, and it comes from M. Chauvelin; but it is true that we may expect selfish interests to make their proper influence useless and that the mistress might issue in the end from all dependence on them.

[September 20.] It is said that the cardinal had, on

Monday, 15th, a conversation of two hours with his Majesty, from which he issued with a radiant face, and the king with a mortified and contrite air. The old preceptor, they say, has some secret spring by which he stirs his pupil and makes him go the way he chooses; preaching to him at times and even compelling him to confess his past faults.¹ At any rate, since then the king does not sup in the cabinets with the women, and Mlle. de Charolais has gone to her "Madrid" before going to Fontainebleau, where it is doubted if she goes at all. They say that his Eminence represented to his Majesty what would happen if he confided his affairs to women, who appear to have been talking of them with the king. But I prefer to believe that all this is like the fine scene of Burrhus and Nero in Racine's tragedy of "Britannicus;" I do not admit that there was any base attempt like that, or that our king bears the least resemblance to Nero, being destined, on the contrary, to be more like Titus.

The Chancellor d'Aguesseau has just made a most absurd rule for the procedure of the Council; it is his mania to make laws, and no genius was ever less fit for it. He is an erudite man, and for the reason that he has successfully

¹ See "Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon" Vol. IV. of the present Historical Series. He says: "We have from him (the Abbé de Vittement, rector of the University and sub-preceptor of the Duc de Bourgogne) an astounding prophecy, of which the key has been vainly sought; he made it to Bidault, and Bidault related it to me. . . . Referring to the first rays of the omnipotent power of the Abbé de Fréjus [Cardinal de Fleury] over Louis XV., Vittement said: 'His omnipotence will last as long as his life, and his reign will be without limit and without trouble. He has bound the king to him by ties so strong that the king can never break them. What I tell you now is what I know well. I cannot tell you more; but if the cardinal dies before me I will then explain what I cannot tell during his life.' Unfortunately the Abbé de Vittement died before the cardinal, and has carried this curious secret with him. Results have only too plainly shown that he spoke the truth." — Tr.

and eagerly filled his head with the ideas of other people he has invented and created very little of his own. It is thus that these great learned men have usually vast comprehensions and limited minds. But for legislation one must see things in the large; one must detach one's self from what one has learned best; and that is precisely what one feels to possess above others; it is therefore attacking self-love, with which small minds are more tainted than great ones. The chancellor has made children like himself, who even exaggerate their father's character; men who see all things in small ways, never in large ones; lovers of our ancient forms, and constantly inventing new ones to plaster over the abuses of the old. All these Messieurs d'Aguesseau, from having had morals too good and being too long buried in study, have become unsocial or anthropophagous, and are not friends of the people; never having been to the theatre, or drinking a bottle, or seeing women; hence, they do not know men, nor how to take them, nor how to defer to them, nor how to establish power over submission. These are certainly great defects in statesmen.

What do we need for our laws? 1st. To work in a large way; that is to say, to abrogate a quantity of regulations dictated in their day by the inequality of authority, but which to-day are very hurtful to the general welfare. 2d. To allow more *arbitrio judicis*, as in Turkey, where some of the features of distributive justice are divine; and for this effect to put honour into the administration of justice.

I call it putting honour into it, when you put in office men who are commendable for honour; this forms others, as a coward, they say, becomes brave when he finds himself in the regiment of Navarre; set aside the interests of the Palais; inspire the judges with a spirit of expedition and a thirst for justice.

[October, 1738.] My brother stirs me up on the affairs of parliament and the Council in relation to those of the Church; "You are a bit of a Jansenist, brother," he says. "Far from it," I answer; "but here is my confession of faith: I shall always be very keen against persecution and against hypocrites who, without having any religion themselves, make use of it for their cupidity and their ambition; and I shall always make every effort to get them set aside from even the audiences at Versailles."

The settlement of affairs between England and Spain has never been so far advanced as it is now. It has been signed and ratified; but his Catholic Majesty in ratifying it added some restrictions which occasioned several conferences in London, and in the meantime the season is much advanced. It has been determined that Admiral Haddock with his formidable fleet shall winter in the Mediterranean. The English see their concession for licensed vessels for five years about to expire, and then a great void will appear in their commerce and in their national debt, part of which has been placed on the South Sea Company. If the Walpoles obtain the renewal of this lucrative privilege for thirty more years in return for the help that England will give Spain to reconquer portions of Italy during the absence of the imperial forces, what praises for the Walpoles! what satisfaction for all those grasping English!

How else is to be explained the enormous expenditure of England on her fleets merely to settle in a poor way the affairs of America; spending ten times more to obtain indemnity than the indemnity itself. These goings and comings, these tergiversations, these delays of a settlement already agreed to without admitting any mediators, these advancements and retreats according as the cardinal's health is better or worse, this sending of the English fleet to the

Mediterranean instead of to America, the seat of discussion, this wisdom of the Spaniards, all ready to bite but biting nothing of Italy on so fine an occasion — how are these to be explained? Is the game postponed for the present? Certainly we should take the part of the King of Sardinia in such an attempt; without which he will take sides in defence of the Emperor. But the question is, what shall be abandoned to him? The English have the ruling fit; they play the fine rôle, and we the villanous one.

IV.

1739.

THE French Academy has been engaged for a whole year in deliberating on a great question: ought we to say the *patton* of a shoe or *pâton* — the *a* short or long? This was considered so important and so embarrassing, that they have finally separated without being able to decide.

My brother has just been appointed president of the grand Council for one year. The rumour is strong that during this year of his presidency they will pass the great stroke of despotism which has long threatened to consider all appeals to parliament as abuses, and bring them before the Council. The great Council has become a mere committee, delivered over to all the influences of the ministry. The councillors consider themselves as so many masters of petitions; they pique themselves on their defects; they see their revenues and their consideration increasing, as the officers of the parliament are reduced, and provided a few more intendants are sacrificed to them, their heads, or rather their hearts, will be wholly turned and they will be so many Mahouls and Chopins, that is to say, rascals. To arraign appeals as abuses is to take away the finest if not the only jewel in the parliamentary crown, and justice delivered over to the Court will be at the mercy of all the intrigues of bigots and hypocrites. Men can always triumph by false politics in the debilitated times that come so often; ultramontaniam will take the place of our boasted Gallican liberties, called the palladium of France. For a long time the bishops

have been ruminating this miserable stroke of authority, and are pushing it in every way, even by money, so that they are close upon attaining to their scheme of referring all to the Council. It is impossible that this change can take place without a great uproar. Parliament will stake its all upon it; every one must expect that; it will drive things to extremities and put the Court at bay as in 1732, for a little mandamus. What vexes me is that my brother should be at the head of this army destructive of our liberties and of the true resource of the throne; and this wrongdoing is the greater because he seems to wish it and solicit for it eagerly. He is very unfortunate to be possessed by such ambition and impatience for grandeurs as to take these evil means.

I have been talking with a man well informed in Court affairs who said to me to-day at Versailles that M. Chauvelin's great defect, and perhaps his only one, was the habit he had of promising (as they say vulgarly) more butter than bread; and that he had treated even the Duc d'Orléans in this way. From this, they call him a cheat and a false man; but if we examine this defect we shall find it is only an indiscreet enthusiasm to win those with whom he wants to live on good terms, and to whom he really does good. He is returning to favour; and some friend ought to preach to him well about this, in order that he may lessen this excess of caresses and promises. But to whom did he ever do harm? and what great qualities he had for office!

They are urging the king to show himself more in public. He has been twice to the Opera, and the second time he was charming, brilliant, in full dress, and gallant. He was in his box between two princesses; and he paid all sorts of attention to people. On Monday next his Majesty gives

a beautiful ball at Versailles; all the apartments and the gallery will be illuminated; he desires that everything shall be very beautiful and that all the masks in Paris who wish to come should be invited. All this is visibly done to please the public, for it is not to the king's taste; they urge him to it, and he consents out of good judgment. I see in this the advice of M. Chauvelin, his taste, his wisdom, his strong measures; it shows the king to his people; unknown as he has been, he now lets himself be seen as a king and, above all, as a man. It is openly remarked upon as showing that he is coming out of the tutelage of his old preceptor, for all these things have been ordered without the cardinal and by the king's own will.

Within the kingdom things are going in a manner to make one tremble; no morality, selfish interests everywhere; hypocrisy and the zeal of the violent bullists torment the poor subjects of the king and honest men; they are driving us to a schism through the decrepitude of the cardinal, who is the dupe of all the villanous priests who surround him. In the provinces men are dying of hunger or eating grass; bread costs five sous a pound in the Vendômois, and three sous in Paris, and these prices will increase in the spring. What reasons to make the king weary of his present ministry! and to make the virtuous cardinal retire to Issy and allow his Majesty to follow his design of governing himself and of putting in office the men he chooses!

[January 31.] The king volunteered to tell, on the morrow of the beautiful ball he gave at Versailles on the 26th of this month, a naïve incident worthy of Henri IV., and which would have delighted the great king. As his Majesty, being masked, was standing near the buffet from which

refreshments were given, a stout mask, a bon vivant, asked the attendants for Spanish wine; then he took a lemonade glass and ordered them to fill it full. The king said to him: "That is a heavy draught." The mask replied: "Mask, what is that to you? It is not at your expense; it is at that of our good king who gives it to me as willingly as I drink it; here's to his health!" The king was charmed, and laughed the next day in telling of it.

The ball was very fine; foreigners thought it worthy of the Court of France and its regal magnificence, especially the ball at night, from the grandeur and beauty of the apartments, the superb gallery of Versailles, the illumination, the quantity of masks, the refreshments, the order, politeness, ease, etc. It is true that at a ball with ranks there is always great confusion, for places that are taken at first by persons who are nobodies, and the king himself was obliged to make some persons leave them; which was wholly the fault of M. de La Trémoille. Apropos of that duke I will say here: Of what use to him are his wit and his face? He does ill wherever he is, at war, in his office, and, in Paris, mischief.

[February.] All talk about a cardinal's hat for the Archbishop of Embrun, the would-be Cardinal Tencin, has ceased, and appearances are that the king has opposed it by the advice of the man of Bourges [Chauvelin], conveyed through Bachelier; in truth, nothing could be wiser than refusal, or retraction of a promise which scandalized all decent men. I know nothing more dishonourable than those who are the head of the Molinist party, excepting always a small number of sincere bigots frantic for that party. They are not thought so, generally, but the favours they receive at Court betray them; such was Cardinal de Bissy, and such to-day is the Bishop of Langres.

As for me, I would rather make myself a Mussulman than

visibly sacrifice and use my religion for ambitious objects; for that adds hypocrisy, knavery, tyranny, the lust of oppressing one's neighbour to treachery and unbelief. It is worse than apostacy; it deprives one of honour; without which one is not a man.

[February 22.] To-day, after the rising of the Council of State, the marriage of Madame de France [Marie-Louise-Élisabeth, eldest daughter of Louis XV.] with the Infant Don Philip of Spain was announced; they say he may one day become King of Naples; the Prince of Asturias having no children, he and his wife being equally sterile. The dauphin is rejoicing in his sister's marriage; he says that in eighteen months he shall be an uncle; Madame Séconde [Madame Henriette] weeps at the thought of parting from her twin. The journey and marriage are to take place next year when Madame will be twelve years old. Madame Séconde is learning Italian; additional assurance of her marriage to the Duc de Savoie.

In consequence of these new favours of France to Spain it is thought that a general peace will immediately be signed by Spain and made public. By these alliances with Spain it is seen that we are drawing nearer to M. Chauvelin's system. Rumours, through which matters transpire before being realized, prove that mystery is no longer the soul of our affairs, as in the days of his ministry; but there is every appearance that his secret counsels inspire the king to take these steps.

The Princesse de Conti, daughter of the king [Louis XIV. and Mlle. de La Vallière] is at the last extremity, and cannot recover; they think she has an abscess, or else water, on the brain; she is in a continual stupor, from which powerful remedies withdraw her for a moment, after which she drops into it again.

It is arranged that the king is to be at Compiègne for two months next summer, and return to Versailles early in August for Madame's marriage. She will be twelve years old August 24th, and she is to be married on the 15th. This will cause fêtes at Court, and the king is already talking of the fine clothes the courtiers are to wear; it will render summer dressing very dear this year. The princess is to leave a few days later for Spain, and Mme. Tallard is to accompany her to the river of Bidassoa.

The king looked closely at me during his unbooting to-day, and told me afterwards that he thought me much changed by my attacks of fever. The cardinal asked me what I thought of the affair of the University; about which he had charged me with rendering an account. I told him in a few words; it is to be hoped that the matter will be arranged and the public satisfied.

[February 28.] There is great talk about M. de Fulvy, brother of the contrôller-general, and his wife, who, being at supper with Houel, the gambler, lost twenty thousand louis, and his wife ten thousand; in all seven hundred thousand francs; the wife lost her part of the great sum first; then the husband tried to recover it and went too far. A few days later all these sums were paid in ready money, which has scandalized the public, inasmuch as M. de Fulvy, who married for love, did not have twelve hundred francs a year of his own when his brother became contrôller-general; and to-day he robs to spend; for they say that in the end he will be as poor as he ever was. But he is now in much danger if we may judge by the fury with which the public has fastened on these rumours, which may perhaps be much exaggerated, in spite of the general discredit of the family.

An anecdote which historians will not notice, or not enough, is that Philippe d'Orléans, the regent, towards the

end of his days and after the majority of the king, felt a true love for the king, and for his own son, the Duc de Chartres, a terrible aversion. He said of the latter that he united all the defects of the princes of the blood — the hump of the Prince de Conti, the hoarse voice and silliness of M. le Duc, and the rudeness of the Comte de Charolais. "What!" they affirm that he said, "shall I wish that my son should reign to the injury of this amiable lad who is to-day my natural master? Ah! all my wishes go to the contrary." The regent had made himself prime-minister on the death of Cardinal Dubois, and he took his portfolio to the king every evening at five o'clock. He amused the young prince by telling him many applicable facts, instructing him by this method and by the curiosity it inspired in him. The king enjoyed these conversations and awaited with impatience the hour for this tête-à-tête work, which he loved, and therefore made the duke love him, for we like those who show a liking for us; besides which, the king was then a charming figure. We shall long remember how he reminded us of Cupid that morning of his coronation at Reims in his long robe and silver cap, — the dress of a neophyte or royal candidate; the king himself still speaks of it. I never saw anything more affecting than the regent's face that day; his eyes growing moist with tenderness for the poor little prince who had escaped so many dangers in his youth. The king pleased the regent also by his natural cleverness, lively and naïve. He certainly has wit, and a pretty memory, and he likes intelligent men, and honest men.

The Prince de Chalais is to-day one of the courtiers who stands best with the king; he discusses affairs at length with him, and talks good sense to him. This courtier plumes himself on his attachment to M. Chauvelin, and seeks every occasion to speak of him to the king. But that dismissed

minister, now so near to a return to favour, has stronger strings to his bow, and the king does not need to hear more on that head, but simply to keep the grand secret.

My profession of faith on the subject of Jansenism and the bull *Unigenitus* has always been sound and worthy of respect, as to dogma and ecclesiastical discipline, but very heretical and open to rebuke as to politics. On the first point, I think that a layman ought to be submissive to the Church, the pope, and the greater number of the bishops; consequently that the bull is good; that it has been sufficiently received, pure and simple; that the pastoral instructions have been a good commentary, and a sure preservative against abuses, — but this without regard to acceptance. I think that a layman ought not to enter into these matters, nor even an ecclesiastic of the second order, who is bound to submit himself blindly to his superiors, appointed to instruct the bulk of the Church; and if they absolutely compel him to sign pledges of acceptance, he ought to do so, since faith has become doubtful; and I should do it myself without hesitation.

But, politically speaking, my business being that of a magistrate and a statesman, I think that what I have last said on acceptance by laymen is very bad; that every one should be left in peace; that they are doing wrong to stir up the Jansenists as they do; they should let them die out, and meantime prevent their swarming and propagating, by refusing them all Court favours, rebuffing and disgusting them in that way. They would never make trouble at Court; it is those rascally Molinists who incite with fury to persecutions, through ambition. I would brand such persecutors with profound contempt; I would prevent their approach to Versailles; I would coldly repress all innovators among the Jansenists, but my punishments would go only to repression, not to ven-

geance; I would take all weapons away from enterprising Jansenists, and that is all. I would not try to hurry by violence the extirpation of this heresy; and in that way I should cause it to be forgotten. That is the conduct that ought to be constantly maintained against Calvinism in France. For want of it, we have had dreadful wars, which we shall soon see renewed against Jansenism; and the treacherous and ambitious Molinists, together with our whole ministry of to-day, wicked in policy and without principles, will be the cause of it.

[March.] Paris is inundated with public gambling, with houses where games of chance are played, and miserable suppers given; the bankers pay three louis a day to the mistress of the house; companies are formed in which numbers of the high players of Paris are interested. I have seen these agreements; the capital is a hundred louis, and the shares are usually six louis. There are more than three hundred such houses in Paris, where they play at *pharaon* and *biribi*; all the young men are getting ruined. The play at the hôtel de Soissons and the hôtel de Gesvres is the cause of this evil; one cannot rebuke any particular house without being told of the tolerance shown to those two schools of gambling. The Abbé Gaillande, confessor of the hanged criminals, told the cardinal that he ought, in conscience, to state that three-fourths of those criminals and roués confessed to him that the first cause of their misdoing came from losses made at play in those two hotels. It is proposed to give MM. de Carignan and de Gesvres an equivalent, namely: remission of tax on cards, and by this means to make good to them forty thousand crowns. Thuret, director of the Opera is also manager of those two gambling houses; he pays ten thousand francs a month to each of those gentlemen, which makes two hundred and forty thousand francs a year in all.

they had no interest in doing. They saw M. de Pompadour as the enemy of the political nation; the things which go on under a foreign affairs if they were made for more than fifteen years the fact is in the year M. de Pompadour that is to say, under M. de Richelieu, who saw the two years before him and the whole political situation, who looked into future ages and times, who saw still farther and more accurately.

The last given in Cardinal Fleury, describing our government, that he had made, and is to say, the ministry of the cardinal, makes desired the public involved in its terms; following laws about a descent on the Jesuits, that party being revealed at-day by all the honest men in the kingdom with great justice and persecution, these two states being by moderate and justifications made ready to come back in the first show of resistance — the parliament at length states the Court because it believes it is on the point of changing sides.

The whole strength of the party of Cardinal de Fleury rests to-day in that of the archbishop [Jul. Eugénies]. The poor old man, dejected, abandoned by all since his illness, his incapacity, his senility, with his faults, the dislike of the king and the Court, the shining of M. Charvetin's party — these are the points in which the Molinists offer to support him, advise him and even make him formidable. But the condition they make is like a compact with the devil; he must give himself up to them wholly, and serve them with all his might. Such has the cardinal become in regard to these rabid ultramontanes, men whose boundless ambition, vengeance, exclusion of all honest persons, in a word, all the views and the practice of Jesuitical Italians, are the mainspring of their conduct. Some have a sense of behaviour; others are fools, sincere, but loving their personal

[March 4.] It is known that the king gave the cap to Cardinal de Tencin, archbishop of Embrun, in his cabinet; so there he is, the peaceable possessor of the coveted dignity. One's mind is confounded before this action; evidently the king has evaded his best counsellors. To what can such a step be attributed if not to the very vicious facility with which the king lets himself be taken advantage of by his old tutor, who must have made him see the matter from the Rome, the Vatican side, and the impossibility of otherwise having an ambassador at Rome after M. de Saint-Aignan, who is about to retire. Bad practice, however, to have cardinals at Rome charged with our affairs; for who will then maintain our Gallican liberties? Subtle politicians will say that in consequence of this appointment to the cardinalate the public will revolt against the ministry of Cardinal de Fleury: dotage, indignity, threats against the public of an inquisition and a Saint-Bartholomew against the Jansenists, flames everywhere, parliament capable of some great stroke as to this, because, trusting only to the hope of a coming better reign, it sees the king letting himself go in this affair. And, in truth, to honourable men what a choice! what an unworthy object! The selections of Cardinal de Fleury have always caused surprise and nearly always indignation.

[March 9.] I had to-day a long conversation with M. Pecquet, clerk of the Foreign Affairs, who told me sincerely what he thinks of the condition of the kingdom; and he is equally enlightened and penetrating.

According to him, there has never been so little system in the ministry; they pique themselves on hating the very word; and yet that word "system" simply means *plan*; they are wrong to take it ill, and suppose it means a bad plan. How is it possible to build without a design? Is it not a characteristic of a dwarfed mind to work only from day to

and injustice they are increasing visibly the number of the Jansenists. They are playing the same game by which all France was convulsed on the matter of Calvinism. Cowardly and treacherous ambitions are driving the poor, decrepit cardinal, and adding to these horrors, they obsess him and make him believe all they choose. Instead of watching that the Jansenist party shall not spread, they irritate and increase it; they talk of suppressing parliament, and other extreme measures, while the Jansenists are leaguely together and rendering themselves capable of striking blows. It was thus that they roused the whole parish of Saint-Roch, by changing all its rectors, and first, all its vicars; thus that they stirred the affair of the Calvary by changing its chief superiors and then dispersing them like the nuns of Port-Royal; and thus they are proceeding in the matter of the University.

There was some dispute as to the continuation of M. Piat as rector, and the poor chancellor, d'Aguesseau, persecuted by M. Hérault and the other imbeciles and scoundrels of the bull, issued a decree forbidding the members of the University to plead in the matter before parliament, and ordering that all papers and minutes should be brought to the Council; and, later, he appointed us three commissioners to give account of our opinion and render it to his Majesty. The affair was examined at my house (I being the head of the commission) on Sunday, March 8, for three hours during the morning. I found in MM. Fortia and d'Arnouville all the integrity that could be desired; the first, being suspected by honest persons in other matters, wished, no doubt, to recover his reputation. We found the affair as bad a scheme on the Court side as it could be. We went at once to Versailles, and that evening from five o'clock till nine we worked at the affair and gave a report

of details and of our reflections to the chancellor at a length which may be judged by the time employed. The poor chancellor made us pity him; he hunted and fingered on all sides to find how to handle a bad business—it was he who had issued the mischievous decree of suspension of the court of appeals of parliament. Parliament decreed to make remonstrances on this spoliation of its authority, above all, it said, at a time when sound maxims and good doctrine were attacked throughout the kingdom.

The next day, Monday, we had a rendezvous at the cardinal's at four o'clock to work over and decide the affair. I went at half-past three, as he was taking his coffee. You should have seen that room all full of frowning and hideous bishops, awaiting the dead body to devour it, like vultures after carrion; each was slipping in his word for some favour. But above all, there was Cardinal de Rohan, with M. Hérault and my brother giving him his cue to prepare him against us; they went from him to us, and we were presently sent into the antechamber with all the others to leave his Eminence alone. The parleys then went on at a great rate to seduce us, but we held firm. My brother only advised me to say little to his Eminence and let the others pick bones with him, but M. Hérault told me sublime things, such as this: that private rights should always yield to superior views; that for this reason a judge ought not to feel scruples in condemning to death an innocent person if it was plain that there would result in a few days some great general good: this great general good is, they say, that in two months the appeal of the University will be revoked.

The bottom of all this is that Cardinal de Rohan means to commit the stupidity of getting his nephew, the Abbé de Ventadour, elected rector of the University; so that

he will have the credit of the revocation of the appeal, and thus merit from the Court of France, and that of Rome especially, the coadjutorship of Strasburg, and subsequently the cardinal's hat.

I shall not say more on the details of this meeting, which lasted two whole hours. The cardinal, biased as he was, entered into the whole difficulty, and felt it. He recognized that the affair had been badly reported; that quantities of facts denied by both sides were not sustained by documents; and thereupon the decision was postponed to another time, although the matter was pressing, as the election of rector takes place on the twenty-fourth of this month. I tried to say little, but I said *things*; I tried to place them as best I could; I set myself to hear and get the value of all that the cardinal said, in order to refute him politely.

There is great uproar in England; they have had riots among the people on hearing that two English vessels have been sent to the bottom by the Spaniards. This, they said, *this*, is Walpole's treaty of peace! we gave him all power to arm the forces of England; he has spent twenty millions for us (French money) in armaments, and for all that he gets only a miserable treaty in which Spain keeps back almost as much as she restores for our vessels!—To this is added the love of the people for the Prince of Wales and their contempt for the king, the national debt, which is finely increased since the last parliament, the reconciliation of France with Spain, and the great number of lords in the Chamber of Peers who have declared against Walpole.

Within the kingdom, the archbishops and bishops of the provinces most scourged by famine have orders to write a circular to their parish priests instructing them to write to

all the lay seigneurs requesting them to assist the poor. These letters outdo everything; that of the prelates is imprudent, that of the priests is insolent; it speaks of a decree of the Council to enforce these charities, and of the "humiliating orders" which persons will draw upon themselves unless they obey the Church in this matter; and it also says that constant accounts will be rendered to the government of the manner in which each person behaves respecting it. These parish priests, who are usually on bad terms with the seigneurs, thought they were so many little ministers charged with these orders, and were pleased to think themselves raised above the seigneurs. In my province of Touraine, the latter all revolted against this innovation; and through this insolence of the priests charity was chilled instead of being warmed. Quantities of worthy persons who were helping the poor protested against this coercion, and gave nothing more. They thought they saw in this an approaching reign of priests, the cardinal being now surrounded entirely by that villanous class.

The Abbé de Ventadour, nephew of Cardinal de Rohan, has been elected rector of the University, as I said before. It was not done without disturbance; but the young men who went to the assembly made such an uproar that they carried the day. It remains to be seen what the best heads, the leaders of the University, parliament, and the people will say about it; and to what degree of heat these violent innovations will give rise.

The king's course is settled as to what his Majesty will do when deprived of Cardinal de Fleury, and nothing can change it. He has said that the Foreign Affairs will be conducted by some one able to govern them well; and that *some one* can be no other than M. Chauvelin, as he is described. M. Bachelier has let himself out of late on the

subject of the dismissed minister, and has admitted him to be the man in the world who is dearest to the king and most esteemed by him. His Majesty sees that it was only through envy and by a cabal that he was displaced and his character blackened, but finding nothing against him this passing through the crucible has only shown his purity. Bachelier swears he has held no communication with him. The king has long, as I have heard said by persons in his Majesty's intimacy, had his plan made in regard to M. Chauvelin. He believed at first that Cardinal de Fleury had all the ability of Cardinal de Richelieu joined to the integrity of a Joseph; he still believes in the last quality, but the first has vanished, to his mind, since the dismissal of M. Chauvelin. As long as the cardinal's days and power for work lasted the king resolved to profit by his youth to divert himself, hunt, go about, and amuse himself as he pleased; and during this time to learn, profit, reflect, and inform himself about public affairs, as a private speculator might do, and thus acquire age, force, maturity with these ideas. Nothing could be wiser nor more just than this project, and everything induces belief that his Majesty will execute it.

[April.] We have long argued, my brother and I, on affairs of State and of ambitious views for him, and even for me who think no more about them. I have noticed that the real defect which will always cause my brother to fail in grand objects, even if he had them, is that he never thinks of persuading his superiors except through their weaknesses, not by their true interests; the great good, public utility, has not even a fragment of the meditations of his mind; he scarcely thinks of it. In this way he pleases for the moment, but he is never useful enough to be at the same time and steadily liked and esteemed. My brother has a strong soul, stronger than mine, but with that boldness he

has a mind more petty than I can tell. He goes at great things by little means. How many men there are whose conception is mistaken for genius! such conception moves quickly and leads their passive faculties to listen readily to the ideas of others; it rises even to great ideas, but in criticism; they take it as an external nourishment which their stomach rejects. From this littleness of soul combined with this boldness and force of mind it results that my brother can only work in sight and when his work is destined to be quickly seen. Hence also he prefers the sciences that stimulate curiosity, like physics and geometry, to political, moral, and metaphysical studies; and among political subjects he likes the science of law according to our forms and legal methods of proceeding, which are worse than the abuses from which they pretend to protect the public. I have not his boldness of temperament; if I am worth anything it is because to my laziness and my shyness is joined a rectitude of heart and mind which makes me like better *to be* than to appear. I need loftiness in objects to inspire me with the boldness necessary for undertakings, and, above all, perseverance and constancy of impulse. But then the *I* is forgotten, and I think only of others.

[April 17.] The king has declared openly that he will not receive the sacrament at Easter. Our fool of a grand provost asked for his orders about touching scrofulous patients; our kings do not perform this miracle until after they have made their Easter devotions. The king answered the provost curtly, "No." People groaned at this scandal. Appearances at least might have been saved by a low mass said by Cardinal de Rohan in the king's cabinet, Père de Linières being present, and they could mysteriously have held their tongues about the king's not presenting himself for confession or the Eucharist; but the king disdained

that ridiculous comedy, being plunged in adultery and not intending to give it up. Truly honourable men hold the opinion that his Majesty has religion and is openly honest in not being willing to take the sacrament unworthily, nor to play a comedy more unworthy of his rank than it is scandalous not to fulfil his duty. This leads further still to his shaking off the yoke of the old preceptor.

The ill-humour of the cardinal increases and his spirit of decision lessens daily; he involves us in a quarrel with Holland unnecessarily; he refuses an adjustment with Portugal, who has sent her own ambassador *carte-blanche*. The publication of the peace has just been postponed, no doubt for certain difficulties that show the sort of men who govern us. The king is much dissatisfied with the incompetence shown by M. Amelot, minister of Foreign Affairs, who takes no counsel except that of his memory and his barren mind. His two head, and excellent, clerks, MM. du Theil and Pecquet, are doing nothing; he does not give them a quarter of an hour's work a day. M. Amelot has drawn up very badly the minutes and project of a treaty with Corsica. He is full of negligence and impracticable things.

The king endures the cardinal with more and more vexation and impatience daily; he shows it to him at every turn; he is brusque to him; he does not answer him. But all these rebuffs will not avail; the cardinal is governed by his habit of reigning, by the hypocritical Molinists, who tell him incessantly that for the good of religion he must govern the kingdom to the end, otherwise this poor France will be ruled by irreligion. They support themselves by the fact that the king has declared he will not perform his duties at Easter this year, that France will be more and more delivered over to heterodoxy and to schism with Rome, everything yielding to the influence of the house of Condé, which is

known to be Jansenist. But what retains him most in his office, now so precarious, is the certainty, of which he daily convinces himself, that M. Chauvelin will step into his place the moment his Eminence turns his back, and this thought turns his head.

The public is alarmed by a rumour put about that Cardinal de Tencin is to become the assistant of Cardinal de Fleury. The former has made himself absolutely a cardinal-valet; he is always at the *lever* and the *coucher* of the prime-minister; he supplies him with memorials about everything; but the devil of it is to make the king like him, and that goes backward instead of advancing.

[April 28.] Expecting to start for Lisbon I wrote M. Chauvelin the following letter:—

PARIS, April 24, 1739.

I cannot, Monseigneur, leave the kingdom without taking leave of you, and without speaking to you of my prospects and even of yours, in order that I may assure you of the continuation of my sentiments.

According to the answer with which you honoured me on the 20th of last month, I see that you were ignorant of even my residence; that idea has grieved me, although I understand it. Your brother-in-law sent me your letter, and if I could not find an equally safe way of sending this I would deprive myself of writing it, however great a pleasure that is to me.

I seem fated not to leave a career for which I have never had either taste, talent, or advancement. To this I have resigned myself for the last fourteen years. There has been for me no means of getting out of it but that of being known to you, or rather of being divined by you through the kindness and the friendship with which you have honoured me, and which I ardently desire may be justified by results.

I am not summoned, they make no use of me except upon the memorials you have given them; which were, assuredly, the least of the inspirations derived from your illustrious ministry. To end

what concerns my fate: I was destined to another embassy when that of Portugal was thought to have failed; I did not ask for it; I have proposed myself for nothing, thank God; I am content to be in all things for myself only. All that I can claim of my own getting for my fortune is the memory of your wisdom, your moderation, your attachment to the king and the State, and the love I have for such virtues. I have heard talk of several other things for me; and I have always recognized their source. I have listened, I may confess with some curiosity; but, thank God, I kept to that, and nothing has interfered with my tranquil resignation.

In truth, monsieur, what I desire most in the world is to see the State well-governed; and as my wishes are not at all blind, I join to them what means I can of which I am sure. Our master deserves for his virtue to be served according to his desires. I think I have conjectured them truly during the past year. I know on whom he has placed his choice for chief confidence. Fortunate and virtuous are those who work to confirm him in it. I did not need this inducement to feel attached to them. I admire the wisdom that suffers, endures, and awaits the moment with so much patience, fearing nothing so much as to return through the forgetting of old services and the insulting of old age. But such scruples have their limit; irreparable faults, destructive evils, bad selections that stain even noble reigns should be feared. You know to what extent the poverty of the provinces has gone, and your capacity shows you how much farther it may go. We know what party has prevailed at Court since your departure. Men, whose sole merit is to hate you and to be openly interested in opposing your return, pique themselves on serving the religion their wicked ambition betrays, and are ready to violate the constitution of the kingdom. Without any necessity for violence in their councils, they corrupt morals by the choice of unworthy persons, to which they persuade daily. Foreign affairs move no longer, except through the impulsion you gave to them; the rest is committed to chance and a star that may pale; the harmony of parties with one another is being lost; general plans of system are treated as chimerical, and so are grand questions which effectually and sincerely frighten the smallest heads that our nation ever saw at hers.

That, monsieur, is the state in which I leave this kingdom when

I depart about the 1st of next June. I am more uneasy about it than about what concerns me personally. A right temper of duty and reflection, will it put sufficient curb upon the progress of these evils? As for me, I shall acquit myself as best I can, and with all the industry of which I am capable in my consulate (supposing I am fortunate enough to bring one about), and especially with the memory of your counsels, of which I have forgotten none.

This letter is only good to express my sentiments, and merely demands the fire and no reply, unless it may be to hear that you are well and that your genius has still many years in which to serve the State, in spite of those now being consumed in a political exile which I will not qualify as it deserves out of my great respect for him who tolerates it.

[April 25.] I had to-day a long conversation about Holland with M. de Ville, secretary to the embassy of the Marquis de Fénelon, our ambassador at the Hague. He told me that we held Holland by the fear the Dutch have of foreign oppression; that the intrigues of the Prince of Orange, that is to say, the secret practices of his father-in-law the King of England, make our real strength there; for that king, made powerful in money and corruption in his own land by Walpole, has a great affection for his daughter, the Princess of Orange, who resembles him more than she did her late mother. Thus his Britannic Majesty openly supports in Holland the party of the Prince of Orange for the purpose of carrying him to the generalship and tyranny. That produces disunion between the two maritime powers, and undoubtedly it will happen that some of these mornings the party in Parliament opposed to the Court will reproach it for the wrong thus done to the nation. The Dutch have therefore need of us, and are treating us accordingly, in fear of the oppression that this union of interests with England against France may bring upon them.

The present Grand Pensioner is insignificant,—a small

mind, busy about little things; he understands one thing, and that is finance, to which he was brought up. That is another reason for deterring Holland from great enterprises against us, which would begin by a union of the English Protestant party with Prussia.

[April 28.] I was greatly embarrassed when the difficulties ended in Portugal; on one side the exterior ministers said to me, "Go, and go quickly;" on the other the secret and interior ministers said, "Do not go; the king wants to keep you for better things." I asked for a decision, and at last it came. They told me that his Majesty did not think me very unfortunate in seeing the beautiful country watered by the Ebro and Tagus, that I should return in a short time, and that while I was to seem to hurry my departure as much as possible, I was to carry things along until the beginning of July. And, in fact, after a short time, I found the eagerness of the ministers to get me off much chilled. There is no penetrating what words were said about this between his Majesty and his Eminence. But for all that, the payment of my orders on the royal treasury are postponed from day to day.

[May 3.] I think I have spoken heretofore of the affair of the University, in which the cardinal was at first displeased at my opinion being against his scheme, to which he was incited by those vile, ambitious, and treacherous Molinist priests; nevertheless, the good man felt the difficulties, and also my fidelity and frankness. But since then it has happened that their object, which was to revoke the power of appeal from the University, has absolutely failed; hence the cardinal has reflected on the correctness of my opinion, and he now sings my praises everywhere, and even in circumstances which show that the affair of the University is in his mind, for he said the other day to Don Luis d'Acunha: "You

could hardly believe how much that man loves truth; he likes to tell it and displease."

At the same time the king asked me, through Bachelier, for a memorial as to the management of the affair of the Constitution Unigenitus, saying that that was the only thing that embarrassed him as to the future government; that his Council of to-day was ill-informed on these matters; but he felt that the late Duc d'Orléans, regent, had given in too much to Jansenism and that the cardinal was to-day giving in too much to Molinism; and that he was satisfied on this point only with the government of M. le Duc, who punished equally the passions of one side and of the other. Thereupon, I have just sent in the memorial, which will be found in my portfolio of "Affairs of State." Bachelier read it through three times and almost knew it by heart; then he gave it to the king who also re-read it, and put it among his papers, from all of which he makes extracts.

It appears to have brought fruit; for the rumours about Jansenism, the affair of the "Calvaire," that of the University, the bitterness against parliament have all stopped short. They have put a milder rector in Saint-Roch in place of the defunct. It is beyond a doubt that his Majesty spoke to the cardinal as it was needful he should, and I ought to feel much flattered at being the cause of this salutary peace.

The interior of the kingdom is in a state without example; the towns, particularly the capital, have drawn everything into them, especially since the diminution of the currency made under M. le Duc. This was first felt in 1725, when there was a very inclement season. M. le Duc then raised the value a little, and things went better. The cardinal kept the currency in this state; the rich have lost, because of the injustice there is in having to pay three francs in gold or silver instead of the two they agreed to pay when money was

higher ; and as it has happened that commodities have not risen in proportion, universal bankruptcy has followed. As this last act of the tragedy bears upon the lower class of people, they are exposed to frightful misery when the crops are poor ; what would happen, therefore, if we had another famine like that of 1709 ? And yet, the cardinal having set that brutal and imbecile M. Orry over the finances, the more the latter is threatened with disgrace (especially through the pillage of his brother), the more he opposes everything with fresh inhumanities and stupidities, sustaining his credit with the cardinal by flattering him.

The misery within the kingdom has increased during the last year to an incredible degree ; people are dying off like flies from poverty, eating grass, especially in the provinces of Touraine, Maine, Angoumois, Haut-Poitou, Périgord, Orléannais, Berry, even up to the environs of Versailles. It is in vain to tell all this ; the impression made is momentary ; M. Orry persuades the cardinal that they are mere tales, insinuated by M. Chauvelin's party to oust him and discredit him.

The selfish interests of the said Orry in part led him to this gross flattery, but also, in part, the talk of financiers, through whose eyes alone he sees the kingdom. He considers the intendants as so many curates or charitable women, who exaggerate the evil by silly soft-heartedness. In this way he has disgusted the intendants ; he treats the kingdom precisely like an enemy's country on which to levy contributions, and matters are seen only through the eyes of those who draw the highest contributions.

This *political evil*, the full import of which is not known, through the conditions of the currency which I have just stated is a phenomenon which our best reasoners hold to be incomprehensible ; for it is not seen that there is famine everywhere ; it has occurred only biennially in the most

ill-used provinces, with prosperous years in others; it is the lack of money, the lack of *means* to buy provisions which does the harm. Whence comes it? With all this poverty, grains and provisions are getting dearer everywhere; no one employs labour. But M. Orry enforces the taxes with more rigour than ever, the *taille*-tax is raised very high; he shows the cardinal an abundance in the treasury which makes the latter congratulate himself and continue his political projects; and so the same thing goes on.

A year ago I began, on returning from my province of Touraine to expose the horrors of this poverty. The cardinal said to me, "But talk to the controller-general" (Orry). Then the dowager Duchesse de Rochecouart wrote to the cardinal and made an impression. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld coming from the Angoumois did the same thing; and later the Bishop of Mans came from his bishopric to Versailles expressly to say that every one was dying there; and finally, the Bailli de Froulay, who has much access at Court, came from Maine to cry aloud still more powerfully. All this made impressions, and then no more was heard of it.

[May 13.] They say that the cardinal is thinking of being pope after the death of the reigning pope, who is only two years older than himself, being born in 1651, and Cardinal de Fleury in 1653, although the Royal Almanach gives the date of his birth as June, 1655. This explains a quantity of enigmas. Here may be what makes the king put up with him. His Majesty is flattered by the glory of making his old tutor pope, as Charles V. did for his; so he shoulders time along and will not dismiss him until that moment arrives. Here, too, is explained both the spirit of persecution (with which his Eminence was not

originally tainted), and his friendship with Cardinal de Tencin, whom he knows to be a clever scoundrel, capable of great intrigues at Rome, whereas an honest man would not have served him as well.

Nota: Cardinal Mazarin was also destined for the papacy when he died.

Famine has occasioned three uprisings in the provinces; at Ruffec, Caen, and Chinon. They murdered women on the high-roads who were carrying bread. That simple food is more coveted to-day than purses of gold in former times, and indeed, pressing hunger and the desire to preserve life excuses crime more than the avarice of accumulating for needs to come. Normandy, that excellent country, succumbs under excessive taxes and the extortions of the collectors. The race of farmers is extinct. I know persons who are compelled to work their excellent lands by valets; all is perishing, succumbing. The Duc d'Orléans brought to the Council the other day a bit of bracken bread; at the opening of the session he laid it on the table before the king saying, "Sire, see the sort of bread on which your subjects are fed to-day." They have just established in Touraine what they call *le trop bu* ["the too-much drunk"]. Agents come to a gentleman's house and measure how much wine of his own making he has in his cellar. They say: "You can drink only twenty puncheons; we brand the surplus and will pay you for it at a certain time." This is borne out of respect for the formidable name of the king; but before long all will rise against tyranny.

Note about these present Memoirs: They might be written down in order of dates and as a journal in the style of the "Journal de l'Estoile," but my articles are often more extended; there will be a quantity of faults for an editor to correct, and much to reform and prune in the style.

The Bishop of Chartres made some singularly bold statements at the *lever* of the king and at the queen's dinner yesterday; everybody has urged him to continue them. The king questioned him as to the state of his people; he answered that famine and mortality prevailed; that men were eating grass like sheep and dying like flies, and that soon there would be a pestilence, which would be for all, even his Majesty. The queen having offered him a hundred louis for his poor, the good bishop answered: "Madame, keep your money till the king, his finances, and mine are exhausted; then your Majesty shall assist my poor people, if you have any money left."

The whole blame for this falls more and more, and necessarily, on M. Orry. It is a certain fact that the brothers Pâris offered to import seven millions' worth of wheat, the cost of which they would advance, asking but little on account, and by a bargain with the English they could then have bought it for thirteen francs the *setier*. M. Orry rejected the proposal harshly; but a few months later, the famine making itself felt, he had recourse to the same proposal; but the Pâris now asked twenty-four francs for what they had offered at thirteen. To all this the authorities answer that the season is fine, and the fields promise much. But what will a good harvest do for the poor? Is the wheat theirs? It belongs to the rich proprietors, and when they gather it they will be overwhelmed with demands from their masters, their creditors, and the collectors of the royal commodities, who have only suspended their persecutions to make them harder than ever.

[June, 1739.] The aversion of the king for the cardinal increases daily. When the hour comes for work he drops the gaiety which he now has at all other times; he frowns, seems vexed, and tells Balon, the usher, to go and fetch

"that cardinal." During their work together he says little. He lets the old man talk, and refuses by silence or a mere "No" what the cardinal proposes. In short he shows him, and even affects to do so, that he annoys him and would like to disgust him so much that he would retire of his own accord; but no hint is taken.

The minister is no longer the cardinal once master of himself, accepting the ministry against his own wishes, virtuous, moderate, disinterested, seeking nothing for himself or his family, in despair at the king's evasion of work, striving to conquer it and to make himself *useless* (as Fontenelle said falsely of Cardinal Dubois) and the object of the sincere benedictions of the people who regarded him as the author of all good; everything is now precisely in contradiction of all these things. The king knows this; indeed, it is told to him all day long. He sees his old tutor, now eighty-eight years old and in his dotage, he sees him, I say, only two or three times a week, perhaps for one quarter of an hour alone. We can only explain the king's course by two defects attributed to him: laziness of mind and timidity. I do not deny that he has given great signs of both these defects; and yet he likes trouble and fatigue of body; he works alone, as I have said; he feels a need to occupy himself; he has a fine memory, and a quick mind; he has, finally, prepared the way for M. Chauvelin, a hard-working, industrious minister, wise and faithful, known to him to be such, and fitted to relieve him of everything. His Majesty has also cast his eyes on a minister of finance, and a minister of the interior, whose fidelity he knows, and who are capable of repairing the disasters within the kingdom.

As for timidity, I admit that it was born in the king's nature; but he seems to be surmounting it. He is brave in heart, and shows himself on horseback, in hunting and

everywhere, as if he feared nothing; at present he speaks out boldly before every one; he begins a conversation; he answers others. What is it that he does not do? — say a word to an old vegetating pedagogue, or at least write him during his absences and tell him to remain absent. After that, what would hinder the king from reforming the affairs of the country by a new ministry?

On the other side (I mean the cardinal's side), what a great enigma it is! Why does he stay in office? What does he do there? What can he hope? A dying man, shunned, detested by all, seeing himself reduced to half a dozen rascals who remain attached to him for the sake of their own interests, and to a few bankers whom he foolishly courts for their money, and whose rights he has extended in contempt of famine, liberty, and humanity.

The cardinal was born with gentleness and discernment; he has lost them through the ill-humours and intoxication of office; but something must remain which will surely lead him to make a return upon himself; he sees that the king is escaping him, he refuses him many things; and he feels himself at all moments on the eve of dismissal. Many persons thought that he was waiting for the general peace to pull off his shoes and make an honourable retreat; assuredly there is nothing better for him to do in this world than to find some good moment in which to sing Saint-Simeon's canticle: *Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine.*

But peace has been proclaimed, and the cardinal has not retired!

V.

1739 — 1740.

[July.] The king has hastened his return from Compiègne to Versailles; it was to have been the 8th of August, then the 2d, and now it is fixed for the 27th of this month. There is more and more chilliness and sulk between his Majesty and his Eminence, and it is secretly whispered that it will not be a week before something happens for the great good of the public. Nobody wishes the cardinal's death, honourable persons do not wish a man such harm; neither his natural death nor his civil death are desired, only his political death. The king's real plan is to give him so many petty annoyances that he will force him to leave all and retire to Royaumont, or elsewhere. The cardinal has pass-keys to enter everywhere, at Versailles, Fontainebleau, Marly, or at Compiègne. He lately found at Compiègne that all the locks had been changed, so that the day after his arrival he said to Barjac [his valet]: "This key wont unlock — unlock it, Barjac." The latter said they must have changed the lock. The cardinal was furious; he sent for one of the builders, who hesitated what to say; but as the cardinal insisted on knowing by whose order the change was made, "By order of the king, monseigneur," he said at last; "but his Majesty forbade its being mentioned." Certainly there is civility in that; it is dismissing a man with great politeness.

Compiègne has fallen into disfavour. The queen wants to go everywhere; it was the cardinal who induced the king

to take the queen there, and this has annoyed his Majesty, although it procures him more assiduity from Mme. de Mailly, who does not have many weeks of amusement. But the queen chooses to hunt on horseback, and that spoils everything; on the other hand the stags are frightened away from the forest by the cannon fired from the School of Artillery and the attack on the polygonal.

The king is thinking of building at Blois something small, a hunting-box like La Muette, which would not cost much. Meantime his Majesty has Petit-Bourg and Choisy he might use for this establishment, which is to be in sight of the forest of Senay. For all these consolations they await the end of the cardinal, who grumbles at everything. The king has drawings of the buildings made constantly in his presence, specially by young Gabriel.

The king loves Mme. de Mailly more and more; he even allows her to say cavalier things to him. The other day she lost at cards; the king expressed regret; and she replied: "It is not surprising, for you were there." She takes a tone of grandeur as an acknowledged mistress, and everybody sees that her influence increases, but the poor woman has not a louis in her pocket. Here's another insolence of the cardinal: it is ridiculous that the mistress of any farmer-general should be in better condition than that of the king.

A few days ago, Mlle. de Clermont gave a supper at Luciennes; it lasted till two in the morning; they drank and amused themselves much. The king was pleased; they handled the cardinal without gloves and said to his Majesty several times, "When are you going to get rid of your old tutor?"

At this supper the king looked at the sleeve-buttons of the Duc de Chartres, and told him it was ridiculous that they were false, and it was his opinion that they ought to

be real diamonds. His Majesty took upon himself to speak to the Duc d'Orléans on the subject; all this unknown to the cardinal; and when the suggestion was accepted by the Duc d'Orléans in presence of his niggardly and aged Eminence the latter's visage elongated terribly.

The king has insensibly taken a fancy to the Duc de Chartres, who is much to his taste and his inclinations; he loves hunting and walking like his Majesty, and does not like, any more than he, steady application; also he likes honourable men and dignity. The king often talks to him as a father who frolics with his boy, and the young prince behaves admirably and is really attached to the king; which is the surest means of attracting his friendship.

Mme. de Mailly is beginning to fire at the queen, and fails in proper respect, which may bring trouble upon her. They say that the only person who is to-day truly a friend of the cardinal is the queen, because he goes now and then to dry her tears about the king's amour with Mme. de Mailly. As their affliction is sincerely in common, this consolation is also sincere, and nothing binds people more firmly together. Here are two Court personages, their hearts afflicted by the loss — one of the caresses of her husband which that of others cannot replace, the second of his dear despotic authority, now become tyranny, but enervated and not able to last much longer, seeing his age, and the abuse he has made of it.

They are making great talk here about M. Chauvelin at Bourges because he is giving help to all the poor about him, and keeping a skilful surgeon to attend them. They say that all this is done for ostentation; the fashionable notion among the partisans of the cardinal is that all the present talk of poverty is nothing, and is much exaggerated by the Chauvelinists. If the said Chauvelin had not given these

alms, the same people would have said he was a hard man. The wheat harvest is very bad everywhere; it seems as if the heavens were contributing to our ruin as long as we have this detestable ministry to govern us so ill. Never did one hear of hail in so many directions and such losses in consequence; elsewhere it is the wheat-smut, the fog, the sudden heat upon corn after cold rains and northerly winds, so that the ears turn black. Quantities of rye have been frozen which was not observed at first; so that taking out from this harvest, estimated at a quarter less than usual, enough for next year's sowing, we shall, by the end of autumn, fall back into fearful misery, worse than before.

But even if that should not happen, I say that a kingdom like this, reduced to such a point that one harvest, good or bad, decides the general misery, is condemned to a state of continual wretchedness, because many other things are needed to support it; and I say also that poverty ought not to be so general that other prosperities cannot sustain some portion at least of the lower classes which suffer through the cost of wheat.

[July 15.] A new danseuse appeared last night at the Opera. She is Italian, and calls herself La Barberini; she springs very high, has stout legs, but dances with precision. She is not without grace in her twirlings, she is pretty and much applauded, so it is to be feared that her style of dancing will be followed. We have seen already what success Camargo had among foreigners for the perilous leaps she produced here. Our light, graceful, noble dancing, worthy of the nymphs, will be turned into vaulting taken from the Italians and English. Thus has degenerated and is degenerating in our day the celestial music of Lulli; the artist supersedes the man of taste; the merit of difficulty overcome gives vogue to foreign art, and we yield the *pas*

foolishly, when we are, in truth, in possession of higher things.

The king is more in love than ever with Mme. de Mailly; and she is openly more and more against the cardinal and appears to have undertaken his ruin. She is impatient to be declared mistress and made a duchess; meanwhile, she has not a penny. Her husband, who at first set up his carriage, goes about once more in a hackney-coach. The Spanish ambassador is often at her toilet. But she is poorer than ever; so a man who frequents her much told me. Her chemises are all wearing out and in holes; and her maid is ill-clothed, which reveals real poverty. She had not five crowns the other day to pay a loss at quadrille. She is as disinterested as can be; she renders willing service to her friends; but knows nothing about money matters and will not even listen to them. She is frank, she is true; but she is lofty as the clouds and long remembers an affront. All this is in good keeping with the character of the king, who likes frankness and honest persons.

A man at Court, who has been, they tell me, in high office (though they will not yet name him), says that my reputation is increasing at every step, both before the public and at Court; that the ministers fear me and not only wish to keep me at a distance (as I should have been in Portugal) but by depriving me of that embassy to prevent me from obtaining any post in the ministry; that I ought to beware of them; that the course I have taken has put every one on my side, and has given a sample of the extreme dotage, injustice, and tyranny of the cardinal; and that I have what is called the pit for me.

[July 30.] A courtier who has just arrived from Compiègne tells me it is still possible to define the king's nature as good in spite of what is happening in the State and with

his Majesty himself; that he shows intelligence more and more; that he plainly intended to do well at the camp; but that every one noticed he was a *child* from head to foot, amusing himself readily with childish things, like the Duc de Chartres, although he is nigh upon thirty years old. To be a child is to have that sort of imagination which leads to gaiety over trifles and to sudden inconstancy; it is a pretty defect, which may last till the fiftieth year, but no longer. I remember, however, seeing Cardinal de Polignac, in his exile at Auchin, skip for joy because I had procured for him two fine cows from Furnes.

Besides the above, the king is obstinate on four or five points, and nothing in the world could make him give them up; which comes partly from his childishness, partly from an opinion that firmness is good for kings; and this is beginning to get him out of the said childhood. Among his points of obstinacy is the idea that he ought to be absolute master of all that concerns his personal life, such as his journeys, suppers, mistress, valets, etc., into which he will not allow, by sudden and total revolt, that the cardinal should put his nose for an instant.

In the same way (and this the worst of his obstinacies) he is convinced that it is for his honour not to show himself ungrateful to the cardinal, and that he would kill him dead if he took the affairs of the State away from him. But he gives the cardinal, as he goes along, any quantity of mortifications, which may make him leave his post at the risk of what will happen after him; for, as all men feel, it is better to live tranquil than die in obtaining vengeance.

[August, 1739.] Enjoying at this time a fairly good leisure after dismissing my ambassadorial household, and having arranged my affairs as much as they were susceptible of being settled, I found a quantity of tastes with which to occupy

myself in gratifying them. These tastes turn gladly to withdrawal of the mind into retirement and my cabinet, such as reading, composition, painting, etc. I remark as to this that what is called void of mind, which makes men drop into such deep depression, comes not only from lack of applying the mind to anything, but also from dearth of views even when such application is made by men who have only senses and little soul. Such men must have objects of sensual pleasure or of avarice which appeal to low, coarse souls, and affect the prosperity of their family and their neighbour; that is, if their heart is well-turned and they wish for that family and that neighbour the same good things as for themselves,—wealth, possessions, a rich and lucrative wife. When such souls rise to pride (which is still a baseness) they want offices undeserved, without hesitating a moment at their incapacity, because they regard such advancements as patrimonies, and because our system of government has lent itself only too much to that misrule.

But noble souls have other views, and such views are necessary for health, for quick and easy action, for using time, for taking pleasures. Whatever such views and objects may be, they must be analogous with our tastes, natural or acquired. Happy those who have none that are not virtuous!

Dismissed ministers usually perish for want of such views and tastes; they no longer have any but commonplace objects; they are spoilt, they are blasé by the career they have run; they are like a gambler at a louis a counter who is forced to come down to a six-sous stake. The discarded minister ought to put before his mind the care of the good that remains to him as an important object, and forget the great and slippery grandeur that has just escaped him. However this may be, he needs tastes and views well reasoned out to preserve his life, and into them he should plunge at

once, that his activity be not chilled; otherwise the bile which passes into the blood will be black and acrid and will kill him promptly.

Philosophy, well understood, restrains tastes, but does not extinguish them; it leads direct to mediocrity, in which more pleasure will be found than in gold and grandeur; for in the latter excessive desires are infinite and torture infinitely; great passions multiply great cares, oppositions, and frauds which anger the defrauded.

In the mediocrity of a philosopher are views innumerable, but they can be reckoned when we choose; we can stop short at will, and the infinity of desires no longer tortures infinitely. We may plan for ourselves extreme order, great cleanliness, methods that save trouble, the care of health, the acquirement of acquaintances, the power to shine in conversation, to correct the ideas of others, to satisfy our conscience and stir our emulation, or, if you choose, our self-love (rich gift of heaven when used and not abused) by reasoning better than others on all topics. Thus we can enjoy all that nature and art offer in this low world for the delight of our senses and our soul; we relish all, we reason of all, we perfect all for ourselves and for others; and philosophy in its mediocrity enjoys, almost alone, all that, at the cost of great ambitions.

But here is the great career to run, — that of doing good to our neighbour, preserving him from evils, procuring him the greatest good, necessities, utilities, adornments (according to the distinctions of Roman law), shedding benefits on the greatest number of persons and principally on the nation which includes the neighbour in its body, the glory and happiness of which has a charm inexpressible.

I will suppose myself here endowed with native qualities and acquired ideas, fitted to draw my country from great evil,

and lead it to great good, like Moses, called to draw his from captivity in Egypt. I say that here is a great object to fill the heart and mind, and room for action in consequence of such views, action that is nimble and delightful, and yet tranquil, which gladdens the soul, and does not agitate it to fury or bitterness.

To-day France is groaning under an oppression of evils, not of too hard a yoke which demands that it be drawn from beneath its kings, — God forbid ! but from beneath an *odious aristocracy* ; not an aristocracy of nobles who think generously, but that of a *satrapy* of officials of all kinds, who have put all things into forms, bad regulations, mischievous principles and ruin. The parvenus of the law and finance have so arranged our government that to-day every remedy has grown to be a new evil ; and evils have gone so far as to undermine and ruin the interior of the provinces, which have now become a great poorhouse. To bring back right principles, to revive happiness and plenty, are surely objects worthy of the hardest toil.

This, then, is the object that I propose to myself ; I can tend towards it by my studies and my actions ; this, assuredly, is enough to give me views and objects until the farthest known age, say eighty, if I were not called upon till then (as Cardinal de Fleury was) to redress the affairs of State. Meantime I shall occupy myself with all that leads to this desirable and urgent reformation, and that means *studying to be prime-minister*. Everything enters into it, with more or less importance, politics, army, navy ; the administration of justice as they exercise it to-day only enters *ad duritiem cordis eorum*, so as not to seem ignorant of present customs, and for a few reforms of present abuses. In all things I propose for myself the objects I have mentioned : health, affairs mediocre and in good order ; cleanli-

ness and order in all things; the good of our neighbour in detail (when great occasions do not present themselves), the good of our friends by helping them first to evade evil; then we can act vigorously, nimbly, and with pleasurable emotions. Otherwise, all I could do would be to leave my chamber, and go vacantly to walk about hither and thither. I must have objects, everybody needs them; but let people think, in studies, conversations, and promenades, and objects, near or far, will be found. These rules are for every one, for everybody ought to have a business, a *metier*; he will find desires everywhere, and their tendency ought to be attended to; every man is made to be occupied by continual desires; but philosophy renders those desires charming, while corruption and folly render them painful and destructive.

Nota: I think I have written the above in the tone of my Seneca, whom I read constantly.

[August 11.] People do not know how to justify the king for his present behaviour. There is no use at all in citing the example of Louis XIV., who was of little account until the death of Cardinal Mazarin, whom he allowed to govern, after which he showed himself a great king. Louis XIV. made his reign felt by France when he was only twenty-one years old. Louis XV. is nearly thirty; Louis XV. feeds his mind on nothing; he rises at eleven o'clock; he leads the life of a dandy and a useless being. It is true that his health is running no risks, for he takes much exercise to disperse his morbid humours and makes only one real meal a day. He tears himself from his frivolous occupations for one hour's work on his papers and books, and that is all; for what he does with his ministers does not count; he lets them do all and contents himself with listening, or talking like a parrot.

The dauphin is much better brought-up than his father was; none of his tricks are overlooked, and he is made at

once to give satisfaction; whereas the king was a mischievous lad until he was twenty-two years old, and he is still very childish. The king must have a good nature at bottom not to have been spoiled by his bad education. The dauphin has intelligence, and he likes to occupy himself. His masters do not vex him; on the contrary, he likes to keep them longer and learns gaily. In this way he prevents oppositions of will which are so injurious to education. It must be admitted that honourable men have been placed above him, though they are not men of intellect; they do not seek to flatter him or gain anything from adulation; this may also come from the fact that the king is very young and will himself reward them.

Mme. de Mailly is in danger of being displaced from her position of mistress to the king. She is behaving like a crazy woman. It is true that, lacking absolutely everything, she is out of temper; not that she seeks to make profits, but the total want of money made her throw herself into the hands of Mademoiselle and the Maréchale d'Estrées, who talk to her of the means of getting more influence than she has. People can say of the king what they said of Czar Peter when he stayed in France, that he made love like a porter and paid in the same way. The king only keeps to Mme. de Mailly by a carnal and corporeal habit; Bachelier has entirely withdrawn his advice from her; so that everything is going very badly in her affairs.

A man belonging to the Court, who sees things very closely and has sense, thinks that on the death of the cardinal the king will give himself up entirely to Mademoiselle and will be governed by her, not through love, but by the force of her haughty will and her favour, to which she adds, they say, much intellect. It is not that the king does not know her vices, and he particularly hates her indecency, for no one in

the world was ever more indecent than she. She has neither principles nor respect for order and virtue. What a race is that whole house of Condé! — to which in her case is added the bastard folly of the Mortemarts. Mademoiselle would have been a thief, a receiver of stolen goods, a flower-girl if she had been born among the people. The king likes nothing of all that; but boldness and daring stun soft and timid natures when they have once admitted an ascendancy. Mademoiselle has for counsellors, that is to say, for lovers, the Bishop of Rennes, and the Abbé Dédit, the king's chaplain. There is always a time when vicious women give themselves to churchmen as a natural destiny. She expects to give us his Eminence of Rennes as minister of Foreign Affairs, and the abbé will be appointed to some great church.

This is to-day the celebrated party of Mademoiselle de Charolais. She serves as a convenience to the king; keeps company with Mme. de Mailly, in the midst of which she proposes to the king from time to time a prettier mistress, all the while exhorting Mme. de Mailly to profit by her reign and get a better share of wealth and grandeur. What Mme. de Mailly has that is superior to Mademoiselle is sincerity and a very upright little sense, with a rather good heart; this is what sustains her against her own feather-head and the diversity of counsels with which she is tormented. But as she is rather indifferent to her poverty, and is noble in the midst of her needs, her demands have not been shrill, nor her intrigues underhand and tortuous. Nevertheless, Bachelier has abandoned her to her own devices; doubtless M. Chauvelin knows at Bourges all that happens at Versailles. So able a man laughs at these tempests, being himself the maker of most of the waves that compose them. This whole party of Mademoiselle and

Mme. de Mailly are but phantoms more easy to disperse than people imagine as soon as their suppression is facilitated to the eyes of his Majesty — those lazy, timid eyes, though accurate and kind.

[September, 1739.] An English lady who is closely allied to the party of the Pretender tells me that the English nation regards Walpole as a Catilina, and believes he has resolved to give the money of England to the Hanoverians, and arbitrary power to their German monarch, the narrowest and most obstinate of men. They think that Walpole has an understanding with France and Spain for this horrible operation of destroying the rights and laws of a nation of which we are jealous. This lady was a favourite of Queen Anne; a great Jacobite, but a good Protestant; therefore she wants to see the Pretender, or his son, restored. But they must be good Protestants; she insists that it is not merely a question of liberty of conscience (which popish priests and the bigotry in which those poor Stuarts have been educated would never permit), it is absolutely necessary, in order to profit by an impending revolution, that the Stuarts should say, as our Henri IV. did of the mass, "A crown is worth more than a sermon."

As for me, I revert in all this to our general principles; what good will it produce to France and the world? We want nothing from the English except that their commerce shall not be rapine; that they shall not be conquerors in America; that their navy shall not be so flourishing and with such exclusive privilege that they alone have a navy and we none. It is true that they need a rather larger one than we do, because it is (as the Delphic oracle said to the Athenians) their wooden walls; but France and Spain ought to be able to oppose them, if need be, by increasing theirs. We ought to profit by this honourable opportunity

to re-establish our navy without scandal, and take from the English the exclusive commerce with Portugal, which they now have.

And, for all this, what ought we to desire? An English government a little tottering is perhaps a good thing; but, in truth, we must not believe that a tragic revolution is desirable. The very bad present government of England would be necessary to us if we had conquering designs like the late king; but to-day I believe that a legitimate, tranquil king, reigning according to the laws of his nation, and having no foreign sovereignty like that of Hanover, would repress rapine and jewishness, and content himself with legitimate commerce; whereas Walpole and the Hanoverians are combining together for rapine, instead of suppressing it.

If the Stuarts can bring about such times as these, let us favour their return; without, however, spending much effort or making many sacrifices for a result which, after all, is uncertain. But if their restoration could produce the effect I have just mentioned, the obligation they would thus contract towards us would turn, I hope, to the profit of England and the world. We should, besides, gain this: that the Stuarts would have no duty to Austria, like the Hanoverians, and no son-in-law in the Prince of Orange.

The other day, the cardinal, ending his work with the king, said to him: "Sire, I have but one thing to ask of your Majesty before dying, and that is, to remember what I have told you from your youth, namely, that if ever your Majesty listens to the counsels of women in public affairs, you and your State will be ruined beyond recovery." The king made no reply. Shortly after, his Majesty went up to the cabinet where he sups with Mademoiselle and Mme. de Mailly, and said to them: "Just now *a man* said thus

and so to me, and I reply to that, if any woman dares to speak to me on public affairs I will order my door shut in her face immediately." Thereupon they blushed, or turned pale, or were disconcerted; that is to say, Mademoiselle was, for she has great intentions, but not Mme. de Mailly, who is content with everything. It was that little Lebel [one of the king's valets] who heard and repeated this speech.

[September 14.] The marriage of Mlle. de Nesle the favourite sister of Mme. de Mailly, to M. de Vintimille, son of the Marquis du Luc and nephew of the Archbishop of Paris, has just been announced. One hundred thousand crowns have been taken from the royal treasury for this marriage, and the king gives a pension of six thousand francs. There is no doubt that the cardinal has agreed to this marriage; by which it appears that the old tutor comes to terms with the mistress; an infamous thing, after saying so often that he would quit the ministry if the king took a mistress. It is also believed, in consequence of this affair, that Mme. de Mailly's dismissal draws near.

[October 4, 1739.] Voltaire has acknowledged to me the cause of his disgrace with the cardinal and M. Hérault. Those gentlemen, seeing him prejudiced against the Jansenists and a friend of Père Tournemine (as appears by certain verses of his scattered through his works), wanted to engage him to write for the cause and against Jansenism, and he began something of the kind at their request in the style of the "Anti-Provincial Letters." But he went soon after to M. Hérault and told him he could not continue it, that he would dishonour himself, and be suspected of using his talents for mercenary purposes; consequently, he had thrown his work into the fire. *Inde iræ.*

I said to Voltaire, "Monsieur, be a Jansenist like me." There is but one side for a good citizen, who is always

in keeping with the good Christian: it is that of tolerantism, which is destructive of parties in France. Henri IV., by the real and *de facto* peace which he maintained between the two parties gave a mortal blow to heresy; at his death it was nothing more than politics, to support a few ambitious men. Never will there be a finer persecution than the Saint-Bartholomew; it was that that made heresy swarm so in France that every one became Calvinist.

The king loves to erect buildings. They are going up everywhere at the present moment; at Compiègne the sum has reached eight millions; at Fontainebleau they are building a wing; the new wing at Versailles is being finished; and considerable work is being done at Choisy. But everything is restrained by the villanous little economy of the cardinal, and the bad and very bourgeois taste of M. Orry; this is noticeable everywhere, but especially in what is being done at Fontainebleau.

[November 6.] Indications are very strong that disturbances are about to arise in our Foreign Affairs. France is being encouraged to a serious war against England. They assure us that the sea-coasts of France and Spain, which serve as a veritable stage for a maritime war, these coasts, I say, are as good to us as a hundred vessels; that is to say, with fifty vessels, the English or Dutch having one hundred and fifty, we should be on equal terms, and there would be no necessity to make other use of the Spanish navy than to charge it with the defence of their own America; for we, with our fifty vessels divided into squadrons, should suffice to defend our coasts, those of Spain, and the Mediterranean. With that, giving free rein to our privateers and re-establishing Dunkerque, we should soon bring security from England at fifty per cent, which is the thermometer of this maritime war. But all that is very fine and good if nothing

happens to determine the rest of Europe to arm against us, considering our superiority on all sides and our close union with Spain.

They keep saying that there is no one in Europe, no head strong enough, to conduct such a work as a general league against France; but why go so far without finding the Walpoles? Who shows more head than those two brothers? Cold heads, which never get heated by anything: *multa agentes pauca agendo*. The elder, Robert, seems never busy, but he guides all. He has forced his new master to take him back and increase his confidence, though he hated him in the days of his father. The younger, Horace, understands perfectly foreign affairs, thanks to his long embassies and travels. He is diligent and laborious. Robert is the more able financier, and the greater corrupter of men; knowing well how to take the middle course between authority and persuasion; from which we may conclude that he knows men, especially the men of his nation. Who goes better than he does to his ends? Everything turns to success with him; he will contrive to reconcile the father with the son, by slow means but sure; he has to manage the smallest little king's mind that ever was known; and yet he wants to glorify the reign by a war which shall lead to the humiliation of the house of France; he lets the English people desire this war, and all out of jealousy for commerce; he lets himself be threatened with that idea; he appears to be of their mind, and he will draw from this impatience and jealousy of the English the means with which to push his dream of glory. What can be grander than that in a minister?

There is no doubt that a league with the Emperor against us is already made, but conditionally on our not yielding anything. His Imperial Majesty asks nothing better than

to spare himself a cruel war. It is certain that a general war is greatly to be dreaded, and in no way to be desired after two years of calamities such as we have just passed through.

I am assured that the king, in view of all this, has permitted the cardinal a renewal of influence that is greater than ever, and that he relies on him to save him by his wisdom from a grievous war. The cardinal has given in to all his Majesty desired for his little pleasures and for the benefit of his mistress, Mme. de Mailly, so that the latter loves him since the marriage of her sister. The king, they say, cares little for the affairs of the kingdom so long as they do not go too ill and are not definitively irreparable; and his Majesty has resolved to let the cardinal die at his post. The old priest has recovered his health since he sees himself once more so well with his master, and he now looks as if he were able to live some years yet.

[December 13.] It is pitiable to see the little consistency of our Frenchmen in reasoning. They said, during the general war of 1733, that the English and Dutch were careful not to thrust themselves into it; that both those nations were too deeply in debt nationally; that we could recover Dunkerque; that our privateers alone could ruin them, without speaking of what we could do against them by supporting the Pretender.

Then we were at war elsewhere. To-day here we are, Spain and ourselves, against England only; we tremble, we are backing out, we are dishonouring ourselves. No one gives any reasons; our finest reasoners continue to talk of their national debt as being more considerable than ours; in comparison of the extent of the two kingdoms. I reply to that that we should always distinguish the Treasury from the wealth of individuals. To-day, in France, the Treasury

has some system which puts the expenditures on a level with the revenue, paying at the same time the arrearages of national or fiscal debt; and thus, it is said, the king can put something to war by increasing the taxes; reducing them to relieve the people as soon as peace is made. But private persons are exhausted, and their exhaustion increases daily, even in times of peace. Our taxes are cruel. The tariff is still enforced in that arbitrary manner which takes all sense of proprietorship from individuals, thus discouraging and drying up the sources of industry and labour.

In England, on the contrary, though the Treasury may be in a bad state, if you choose, private persons have increased, and are increasing more and more, in opulence, industries, and labour. And such we ourselves were, or nearly so, when M. Colbert administered the finances after M. Fouquet. Then the Treasury was ill-managed, but private persons were rich through the lessened authority of a timid ministry in the midst of civil wars and the troubles of the minority.

And let us compare our efforts in this nation of ours, so powerful and so well-ordered, they say, with English values, and we shall see that we only levy and obtain the ordinary royal revenues by an awful exhaustion of the provinces; that already they are depopulated and are depopulating more and more; that men are dying like flies; that commerce is forgotten; and that consumption is becoming next to nothing. The English, on the contrary, furnish to their Treasury the required and enormous subsidies on the consumption of drink, which goes on increasing; the population is increasing; manufactures are doing well, and foreign commerce is better and better. Why, then, do we flatter ourselves that our neighbours are exhausted, inasmuch as their period of war expenditure does not approach the wretched condition of our period of disarmament?

[December, 1739.] For the last week perfect security reigns in Court and city; absolute confidence has arisen in favour of the cardinal; he is regarded as a god on earth; people assure each other that his wisdom is profound; that he is about to give us a wise peace; that he is beloved by his master, and that we no longer have the slightest jars with Spain. Oh! my too amiable and light-minded countrymen!

The cardinal will never be anything but a perpetual and harmful maker of compromises and palliator of the faults of the government, when he himself has introduced those faults. It is thus that he palliates the affairs with parliament, soothing it to-day when angry. He only gives a few thrusts now into Jansenism. Misery increasing in the provinces, he sends down some meagre relief (long promised), such as rice, a certain diminution of the *taille*-tax, and a little money for work upon the roads; but all that does not prevent the poverty and exhaustion from increasing. They conceal this from Paris, and that is all the ministry cares about.

It is useless for the Court to ridicule the persons of the ministers, for everything turns upon them, on their displacement or elevation. On that ground are the Court battles, defeats, victories, sieges, cabals to displace, intrigues to advance towards the ministry; and all with a view to money; for no one supposes that a minister placed by his hand or by his help will fail to enable him to do transactions or make his fortune unfairly by unrighteous favours and perquisites; and all such favours and places bring money. Those who are made ministers are an extraordinary species; they are never judged before they enter office. Are they sought for among the men of the Council who have the most talent and the best birth? Not at all; those chosen

are the greatest fools and the most obscure, as the she-wolves choose the ugliest wolf.

And with it all, the levity and violence of the French imagination makes us dart suddenly from contempt to confidence. To the notions that bring us to one or other of those affections we add a hundred others of the past, and still more of the future which are furnished by our memory and our taste for prophecy — prophecy rather than foresight. A shrewd man in authority easily puts others on a wrong scent about all these little revolutions at Court.

What I say is that our Court is delivered over more than ever to this state of things, and that we shall never comprehend the proceedings as to favour or disfavour which we see in our ministers, beginning with the cardinal, by listening to the talk of courtiers; and that the whole thing comes either from profound dissimulation on the part of the king, with a systematic and ever constant design as to the future arrangement of his ministry, or else from very great, and almost incredible silliness in his Majesty, who certainly shows intelligence in all other things than external authority.

Bachelier keeps himself more to himself than ever; he scarcely salutes the courtiers. With his best friends he is silent, and especially with those to whom he has hitherto confided matters relating to the king's confidence; he has so effaced the traces of this confidence that many persons doubt if his favour will be continued, and believe that he is on the verge of succumbing to some fresh persecution of the cardinal. And yet, whoever will reflect maturely upon this must say: Where is the security of the king? What plan has he for his action on the death of the cardinal? — for he has one; it would be deceptive to suppose he means to follow the torrent of bad habits left by this ministry.

Whose are those invisible counsels the influence of which is felt, though it cannot be defined, around his Majesty? And finally, what favour could the said Bachelier have with his master if it concerned only the simple intrigue with Mme. de Mailly?

[December 20.] Some one has gone closer to the source of the rumours about changes in the ministry. One is sure to hear nothing that is false from Bachelier; he is one of the most honest men there are in France, and the king's confidence in him increases daily. I have said elsewhere that he is like Proteus, and only talks when he is bound; this wise favourite never speaks unless he is irritated by some question of his master's honour, or from his indignation at the fools and knaves the cardinal has set up and would fain set higher as the reward of their treachery to M. Chauvelin. Bachelier hates all these men and despises them, calling them rascals. He laughed much, so they say, at a list of imaginary promotions to the ministry, exclaiming: "Ah! how fine! Rascal for rascality; that's what they want. Ha! the fine selection! Oh! the admirable combination! What well-informed men!" etc. Especially in relation to M. Orry he said: "*He* stand well with the king? Pretty knowledge of the map of the king's cabinet! Assuredly no man is so much despised."

Bachelier's mistress told H . . . , confidentially, that she had known certain things of the king, traits of character, writings, arguments, and what not, which had changed her opinion and that of her lover, and that she now did not doubt that the king had great good sense and would soon appear as a very great king. Bachelier also told H . . . not to worry about anything; that all would be seen at a given time at once; and that nothing in the world could change his Majesty's plans. It is a regular stage scene, of which they want to

suppress all the parts and let nothing be seen in advance, in order to pass suddenly from obscurity to light; and meantime the cardinal is to be allowed to do all, though some of his most impertinent and harmful strokes will be warded off. But all that is mere puppet-show; and we must not be uneasy at anything, not even changes of ministry, if such became necessary by the death of M. d'Angervilliers.

Bachelier added (on M. H. telling him that of late my bad terms with his Eminence caused me to be ill-received at Court, and that on Tuesday last the king at his *lever* had called my brother and talked to him a long time, but did not do me the honour to say a single word to me, though he saw me before him), — Bachelier, I say, answered that I must not be troubled at anything; that I must go on paying my court to his Majesty with modesty and assiduity, but without ostentation; and that he could answer for it that the king held me “in the highest esteem.” Those were his words.

The king is reading at present the “Memoirs of Sully, or Royal Economies.” I know who had most part in leading him to this long and assiduous reading, by telling him that it was the best study a statesman could make, and that the reign of Henri IV. was the best of models and far above the splendid fatuity of that of Louis XIV. They tell that the other day, Cardinal de Fleury, being present at this reading, turned over the leaves of the book and showed the king the passage in which Henri the Great replied to the beautiful Gabrielle: “I could find in my kingdom two hundred women as beautiful as you, but I could not find two men like Sully; therefore, be certain that between you two I shall decide for him.” (The good Henri was not in a lover-like frame of mind at that moment.) The cardinal claimed to be Sully, but assuredly that is not the opinion of the public.

M. du Luc has written to Mme. de Mailly to ask her to

place a man of his in the administration of the estate of Choisy (which the king has just bought), saying, "One word from the beautiful lips of a beautiful woman will settle the affair." When the mistress showed the letter to the king he said, "Ah! as for a beautiful mouth, you do not pique yourself on that, I believe." Which shows that passion does not blind the king. One loves one's mistress as she is; but sorrow to the blind in love!

Let us define here, with truth, the ministry of Cardinal de Fleury. All that wisdom [*sagesse*] can do when separated from ability, he has shown in himself and in those whom he has used. I speak of that wisdom only which excludes folly and imprudence, but leaves free course to evils, crimes, vices, and through them to dishonour and ruin, by reason of laxity, delays, corruption of morals and of hearts, treachery, cheater; all of which have increased immensely among subaltern administrators and inferiors. The interior of the kingdom has been so outraged in this way that the devastation is visible from year to year. Other misfortunes have been added, but no remedies have been applied. Surely we ought to-day to import some millions of foreign wheat to fill the depots in the provinces and fix the price of wheat. No one thinks of it; all such projects are rejected. And yet one half of the necessary wheat could not be sown this autumn, on account of incessant rain. The monopolizers know this and are locking up their wheat; imagine the dearness of that essential food in the coming month of March!

[January 5, 1740.] I learn from my brother that when it was a question of appointing a chief-president to the Grand Council for the year 1740 the Chancellor [d'Aguesseau] insisted strongly that I should be appointed, as the only man of the Council fitted for the post and desired by the company to follow my brother, whose year had expired, after succeed-

ing well in every respect. The chancellor told him that all others proposed for the place were displeasing and had defects of ill-humour or incapacity, but that he had found an invincible opposition to me in the cardinal, who cannot hear my name without making frightful grimaces since our rupture on the embassy to Portugal, when he so ill-used me in my domestic affairs, and joined thereto manners so tyrannical and misplaced that I have never set foot in that old imbecile's house since then; and shall continue not to do so, please God, unless some official affair requires it.

[January 16.] M. le Duc is very ill of a dysentery with fever. He has had a bad night. They dare not give him ipecacuanha, for they fear inflammation, and they have bled him twice. His stomach has been ruined for a long time; he exists only by going without dinner, but supping heartily; singular phenomenon of a stomach, which at any rate has succeeded well with him; making him able for continual hunting; which proves that the evil is not in the humours, but in the membrane; so that his danger is now apparent. In case of this death the anti-cardinalist and Chauvelinist party lose a great deal. Though the prince himself had little mind of his own, he represented well at Court, through his rank, his weight, his firmness, and his necessary surroundings. People are saying it is a question whether the house of Orléans loses or gains by this death. The cardinal will be more persistent than ever in barring the way to its elevation. Hitherto he has let the rivalry of M. le Duc battle with it, but now he must fight in the open and oppose the marriage of the Duc de Chartres with Madame *l'ainée*.

[January 24.] Bachelier has become of such extreme discretion that to neither mistress nor friend does he tell what he does with the king. He confers with his Majesty more than ever and longer than ever. But he also sees the

cardinal from three quarters of an hour to an hour a day. It is thought that this relates to putting the king once more in love with the queen, and that the cardinal is negotiating this with much fervour as the crown of his glory; after which, would to God he would sing his *nunc dimittis*. Mme. de Mailly is daily losing her empire over the heart of the king; he endures her only through force of habit; it is a common remark that the king will never be given over to the empire of women. Nevertheless he fears the devil. Père Linières, sustained by the cardinal, holds out firmly in refusing him absolution; which often gives rise to great uneasiness in the king's mind. At the slightest ailment he is frightened at the thought of eternity and its horrors. He does not take religion in an absolutely petty way; he has a real conviction about it; but he does not take it in a sufficiently grand way to see that there are no great sins but those that do wrong to our neighbour; on that his spirit is neither great nor small.

They told me to-day, under the strictest secrecy, that the Duc d'Orléans is seriously thinking of retiring from the world and living a monastic life. They give him two years to adopt that course, he having no ambition except for holiness. This will take place, they say, after the marriage of the Duc de Chartres, or even before if that is long delayed; he desires to see his son at the age of reason and settled behaviour, and his plan is to make over to him his establishment just as it is. The Duc de Chartres comes of his mother's side, and is German to the tips of his nails. He has no imagination, no mental tastes; bon-mot, repartees, verses, all that does not affect him; the senses have no hold upon him; but he is firm, has good sense, is kind, just, upright, a man of his word, and lofty as princes ought to be. He is brought-up to haughtiness towards the ministers, especially towards Cardinal de Fleury.

The king is holding out firmly against the cardinal in the matter of appointing some other Councillor of State than M. Gibert, named by the cardinal in place of M. Harlay. The king postpones the appointment from week to week; but that is the only weapon he employs against the cardinal, silent resistance, a means his old tutor taught him himself. In truth, the cardinal really makes the king's life hard; he ought to remember the example of Queen Anne, who endured for ten years the Duchess of Marlborough; and at the end of that time an embroidered petticoat which she refused to give her overflowed the cup and she shook off the yoke.

The domestic affairs of young Vintimille with his wife, the favourite sister of Mme. de Mailly, are going very ill. He is in love with his sister-in-law, Mme. de Flavancourt, and spends all his time at the house of the Duchesse de Mazarin. He complained to his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris, of his having induced him to make such a marriage. The prelate answered that as it was made he had better make the best of it, and not frequent Mme. de Mazarin, which displeased the king. The nephew retorted that to suggest such courses so little became an archbishop that they had brought him evil. Mademoiselle was sent by the king to speak to Vintimille on the state of his household, to which he answered that it was neither for her nor for the king to meddle with what passed between him and his wife.

[January 28.] M. le Duc died the night before last at two in the morning. They kept him alive for the last twenty-four hours with an elixir which gives vigour to the blood; but it shortens animal life while prolonging by a trifle the life of the spirit. He died by his own fault, as always happens with those who die in the flower of their age (he was only forty-seven). He had made himself a bad

stomach; all that he did to cure it was to go without dinner and eat a great supper, to hunt violently in order to get an appetite for the evening, and to take various elixirs of his own making. He had had a continual dysentery for two years, and increased it by such bad regimen instead of strengthening nature by a good one.

The Court is left almost without princes of the blood, if we except the Duc de Chartres, who is growing up to figure there with excellent sense and dignity; we must also except extreme petty piety like that of the Duc d'Orléans and extreme debauchery, intemperance, and folly in the persons of M^{rs}. de Charolais, Clermont, and Conti.

M. le Duc had a patrimony of nine hundred thousand francs a year, and his government, offices, and pension went to another million, so that he had fully three millions a year. All the authority of this branch will now fall to the old and wicked dowager duchess [Louise, daughter of Louis XIV. and M^{me}. de Montespan]. The Prince de Condé is only three years old.

Another senility of the cardinal, another indignity! The day after the death of M. le Duc he went to see the queen. M^{me}. de Luynes said to him with her well-known grace, "Well, monseigneur, that poor M. le Duc is dead." The cardinal put on his burial face, and said he was an honest man, that it was pitiful, dying thus in middle life with all his faculties, and he seemed sorry. Just then M^{mes}. de Villars and de Bouzols came to tell him, "Poor M. le Duc is dead." He turned round to them and said, "M. de la Palisse is dead, and if he were not dead he would be living," — an old song, a vulgar joke to repeat about a prince who had the heart of the king, and for whom his Majesty wept and was ill.

Pecquet [in the ministry of Foreign Affairs] thinks Bachelier is not yet strong enough to get the cardinal dis-

missed, no matter what may happen, or what ill-success attends our arms; not even if famine attacks Versailles; no, not if his Eminence talks such drivel that the children run after him in the streets. He says that there was some jarring between the king and cardinal last year, and then they made a treaty that the cardinal should never again meddle with what concerns the "little interior" and the pleasures of the king, and on the other hand the king would leave the cardinal to conduct the affairs of the kingdom as he pleased until his end.

Persons claim to know a very singular anecdote in relation to this. The Abbé de Wittement, it is said (the same who was joined with the Maréchal de Villeroy in the king's education), knew a secret which he was bound not to reveal until after the death of the cardinal, but as he was the one to die first, that secret was buried with him. It was a pledge, an obligation, a service of some sort between the king and the cardinal of such a nature that the king could never free himself of his bonds. Imagine what it could be: having saved him from poison; substitution of persons; anything you please — but nonsense, all that.

[February 16.] M d'Angervilliers, minister and secretary of State for war, died yesterday at nine o'clock in the evening. He passed away suddenly, without a crisis in his illness; he was smothered, having water on the chest, and one lung gangrened. I saw M. de Breteuil this morning, and inspired him with more hope of recovering this ministry than he had. I know that the king had imparted to M. le Duc his plan for government after the cardinal's death, and there is every appearance that M. de Breteuil is in it.

It is therefore a question whether the king will follow this plan, or whether his timidity will lead him to put into that ministry some other petty creature whom it will be

against the majesty and royal honour to displace later, on the decease of the cardinal. As for me, I am convinced that the king will break a lance and appoint Breteuil; that he will even say he wills it, and no one will reply to that. What is fortunate is that Breteuil's cause is good on all sides; he is an honest man, he has clean hands, he has the spirit of order and system, he pleases the officials, he is just; and finally, he showed sufficient intelligence during the three years he was in the office, without having actually great views.

We made this reflection together: that his appointment, or that of another, would decide on this occasion the good or the evil of the future reign. The king may well have left a few subaltern places to the jealous distrust of the cardinal since he determined on his future plan; but these great important places cannot be given outside of that plan without showing total imbecility in the person of the king, and a blind devotion to his old tutor, which would render desperate his people and his foreign neighbours. If, on the contrary, his Majesty shows on this occasion a firm and resolute will, he can easily be supported by the excellence of the cause; and men will feel that he takes care himself of the important selections.

Boullongne [first clerk of the Treasury] came and interrupted us, and M. de Breteuil took him into a rear cabinet, where Boullongne told him a number of false things: ardent wishes for him, offers of service, assurances of the friendship of his gentle master Orry, though all the world knows that the said Orry is openly intriguing to get the place and still keep his own in the finances and hand it over later to his brother. M. de Breteuil said to me after he had gone, "These men of the Court, or rather the court-yard, never tell you anything but lies."

The pope is dead; the news came, night before last by courier. The Cardinals de Rohan and d'Auvergne start for Rome in two weeks; but Cardinal de Polignac excuses himself from going on account of his age, his health, and the inclemency of the season.

[February 18, 1740.] M. de Breteuil has been appointed secretary of State for war; no one knows as yet what took place between his Majesty and the cardinal, but all appearances show that the cardinal did not solicit the appointment, and that his Majesty said the great word, "I will."

This returns to what I have so often said, that the king has a fixed plan for the government of the country after the death of the cardinal. This plan includes those whom M. Chauvelin recommended to him. M. de Breteuil was among them. If this occasion had not arisen, his Majesty wished to await the preliminary of the death of the cardinal; having arisen, his Majesty so far anticipates on his plan. My rôle is not to see M. de Breteuil oftener than all his friends see him, and to keep myself from any demonstration. I could not, however, conceal my joy before a large company when I heard the news. M. de Breteuil has accepted a counsel from me and will execute it, namely, to seem to hold everything from the cardinal, and to show him externally as much obedience as M. Amelot himself. The king does not wish to be penetrated; he wants everything to roll to the credit of the cardinal as long as he lives; we must serve the king in his own way, and keep from either acting or speaking otherwise before the world.

[February 21.] The king played his part with M. de Breteuil marvellously well when the cardinal presented him as secretary of war to thank his Majesty. The king scarcely looked at him, and did not say one word to him. In the evening the new minister supped with the king, and this is

all the monarch then said to him: "M. de Breteuil, you have an inflamed leg; you ought to have it cauterized."

I have been advised to hold my tongue about the cardinal, and to say nothing offensive about him that can reach his ears. I am assured that he desires nothing better than to be reconciled with me, little by little, knowing that the king has designs about me, and that I cannot be suspected of any bad intentions, but, on the contrary, am frank and sincere. He has made it up with Bachelier on the same grounds, and if he knows the truth at last, he knows that my refusal to go to Portugal could only have come from superior orders. On all this my conduct must conform to that of M. de Breteuil; I must show no warmth for M. Chauvelin to any one, not even to the said Breteuil; never to sound a word to him, M. Chauvelin, but be ready to serve him at once on the death of the cardinal. M. de Maurepas conducts himself in the same manner; but he has certain stains on him, having dipped to the other side and now being penitent. The king likes to be served thus. The appointment of these two gentlemen requires more and more caution in the matter of M. Chauvelin; and I ought not to be less circumspect about him. Bachelier behaves thus, so that his nearest friends have been unable to decide whether he is Chauvelinist or not. The king likes to disseminate these inclinations, but not, as yet, to see any fruits of them. It is with this meaning and these principles that M. de Breteuil was appointed.

They are beginning once more with great parade the ceremonies of the Free Masons, and the Grand Chapter is held at the house of the Comte de Mailly, which the police dare not search. They say that M. de Maurepas belongs to the fraternity.

VI.

1740.

[March 1, 1740.] The rumour runs and grows that Cardinal de Fleury may be elected pope; Spain may concur with France to get rid of him, and Louis XV. with his secret council may, in the present state of things, consider the glory it would be to him to make his old preceptor pope. And what a good riddance! Besides, he is gentle, and those who do him justice forgive him as Christ did the Jews, because he knows not what he does. He is more mischievous than wicked, he is very old, he is very popable; and as for transplanting him, people always make themselves terrifying ideas about a long journey. What of it? how fatiguing is it? To go to Italy at the best season is nothing; he goes in the first place to his native country, Languedoc, there he embarks on a galley and goes straight to Rome; it is nothing at all in fine weather; the air of Italy is soft and excellent for old people.

One thing I remarked more than four years ago in Cardinal de Fleury, at the time that I was on good terms with him, is that he is a great admirer of Cardinal Mazarin and his ministry, and a great despiser of Cardinal de Richelieu. Such admirations suppose a desire for imitation, but imitation is proportioned to the powers of the copyist; so that the monkey, having little mind and small resources, is only a copyist of the low and the little; that is what has happened here, as may be judged by all things.

M. de Maurepas pleases the king extremely, and if he is not destined to govern the State as its leader, at least he will

have, as a great means of favour, his comprehension and compliance in the true designs of his Majesty, into which will enter, when the time comes, the return of M. Chauvelin. It is to him and to M. de Breteuil that the king will confide that desire; and already these two gentlemen have penetrated the mystery, as much by conjectures as by divers revelations, — a half-word said by Bachelier, and by certain subaltern friends, such as Sallé, M. de Maurepas' new clerk, son of a doctor and an actress, the whole coming from Bachelier through his mistress, Mme. de La Traverse, who was an actress herself. Thus M. de Maurepas, if he is not actually prime-minister, will at least be a great recruiter of ministers.

Mme. de Mailly and Mademoiselle are on visibly bad terms. The apparent diminution of Mademoiselle's influence is another decline of the cardinal's party, while that of M. Chauvelin is strengthening. Nothing is wanting but the exile of Mademoiselle, whose indecency is likely to bring it about. Mademoiselle's party is only that of the Noailles and the legitimatized princes, hidden behind this procuress, to whom the cardinal had given in, secretly, in order to form a battery against the party of M. le Duc and M. Chauvelin. The Maréchale d'Estrées was in it only as a second pander, and from the natural opposition of a woman to the designs of her late husband.

My brother is one of the principal deputies of Mademoiselle's party to the cardinal; he holds the ball at his foot, and is treated with great consideration accordingly; he sees Mademoiselle and the Maréchale d'Estrées secretly; he has dragged the poor chancellor into it, also M. de Fresnes, and he bustles around both of them. They thought they had won over Mme. de Mailly; she plays at this intimacy, while at heart she holds to M. Chauvelin and Bachelier, though she

knows but little of the king's secrets on that point. However, her external alliance with Mademoiselle cannot last; in the midst of pleasures and amusements the real thought at bottom is too much opposed to present practices. The cardinal had continual interviews with Mademoiselle at Fontainebleau, who came to him by a secret staircase. That convenience lacking at Versailles, third parties go between them with proposals and facts, and certainly my brother has his share in it.

I talked to-day with a friend of M. le Duc who had his whole confidence. She told me that the prince had been betrayed a hundred times by the dowager duchess, his mother, and even in vital matters; but for all that, he had never failed towards her, and had shown her the respect of an honourable son. Mme. la Duchesse (dowager) said at his death, "Alas! he was the only one of my children who never *insulted me!*"—a fine eulogy on the race of Condé, and the bastardy mingled with it!

The instant M. le Duc was dead, Mademoiselle seized upon the mind of the young duchess and on that of her brother the Comte de Charolais, who is a lunatic with some lucid intervals of furious reason, though he soon wearies of them. Mademoiselle has alienated that young fool from his mother, and placed at the head of the household old Fortia, a man much discredited for his dishonesty and odious to M. le Duc. Everything is turned topsy-turvy under this tutelage, on pretence of bringing things into good order. The cardinal sees what is going on, having a critical and satirical mind, if he has no other, but the fury with which he is engaged against M. Chauvelin makes him give in to the party of Mademoiselle, from which he will get all he can as long as it lasts.

[March 23.] Mademoiselle's party is absolutely sapped.

Mlle. de Clermont said to her the other day, speaking of the king's suppers, "Sister, let us retire from them; we shall soon be dismissed if we do not withdraw." In fact, Mme. de Mailly has been ordered to quarrel with her about some women's trumpery, and the quarrel has reached such a point that they will soon be at daggers drawn. The king no longer speaks to Mademoiselle, and everybody applauds him. The other day he was starting for the hunt in his berlin with Mme. de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille on the back seat and himself and the Duc d'Ayen on the front, leaving Mademoiselle standing without a word.

Nevertheless, a royal go-between is needed; Mme. de Mailly must have a company; and all things point to the Comtesse de Toulouse [a Noailles, widow of the son of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Montespan]. Her apartment leads into that of the king by a secret staircase. His Majesty goes down there at all hours; and it will end in his giving this lodging to Mme. de Mailly. It was formerly that of Mme. de Montespan, and then passed to her son the Comte de Toulouse. His widow is devout (like all carriage panders); she will sustain her part pretty well, provided she does not go to the private suppers, — though it might be a tasty dish for the king, who is young, to make such use of a devout woman. But this place of favour being given to the countess, and she having behind her the Noailles, it begins to be seen that the said Noailles are all making merry at the prospect of building this high favour of the countess on the ruins of that of Mademoiselle.

Père Neufville, a great Jesuit preacher, who conducts the Lenten services at Versailles, preached last Sunday against promotion on recommendations without regard to merit.

One should have seen, they say, at this sermon Mme. de Mailly, the king's mistress, seated with her own ladies at the

foot of the preacher's pulpit, so that the king had in front of him not only the preacher but the lady. At a glance his Majesty could see the *per* and the *contra*, the way and the counter-way, the poison and its antidote.

Nothing is talked of but the dismissal of the two sister-princesses, Mlle. de Charolais and Mlle. de Clermont from the private suppers. Mademoiselle tried, they tell me, to make some arrangement for suppers with the king at La Muette and Choisy, she being a past mistress, through experience, in ridiculous and extraordinary pleasures; but the others know as much about them now as she does, and she was dismissed in this sacred Lenten season. They only invite the Maréchale d'Estrées on Mondays with the two sisters, Mme. de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille, and these with one or two courtiers suffice for these little suppers, for the privacy of which the king has a liking. All this began with a quarrel between Mme. de Mailly and Mademoiselle (they now call Mme. de Mailly "Madame la Comtesse" and nothing else). That wicked Mademoiselle had to be sacrificed to her; at which all honest persons at Court fire salvos of joy.

Mme. de Mailly has appeared in a yellow gown trimmed with Siberian sable, and a little head-dress of yellow flowers and an aigrette; she looks a mask at a ball. The king, on seeing her enter at the sermon, said to the Maréchale de Villars, "I think the Czarina must be dressed like that." Before the world Mme. de Mailly's manners with the king are externally haughty and imperious; in private, she is all compliance and submission. At the public dinner to-day the king looked at her all he could, and when she went away backward he twisted his neck to see her. She has made him believe she has a great passion for him; temperament and habit do the rest; for her want of beauty, one may say her

ugliness, is a great scandal in the eyes of foreigners, who ask on arriving which is the king's mistress. The cardinal has even said to friends that he was vexed at this weakness by reason of such ugliness. But certainly she is well-advised as to her behaviour, in the main and in detail. It remains to be discovered who does it; I have no doubt it is Bachelier, though little quarrels are affected to put people off the scent.

The dauphin is frightfully violent; and instead of this disposition becoming corrected, it increases, although he is now ten and a half years old. He strikes everybody about him; and the other day he gave a great box on the ear to the Bishop of Mirepoix, his tutor, for having contradicted him. He has had, previously, outbreaks of the same kind with the Chevalier de Créqui, who obliged him to apologize, having complained to his governor M. de Châtillon, with a threat of complaining of him to the king. The dauphin has an air of excitement and irrationality which threatens the world with something dangerous.

A courier has just arrived from Berlin bringing word that the King of Prussia [Frederick William I.] is at the last extremity and must be dead by this time. His gout became dropsy, and the dropsy gangrene. And still that singular star of the cardinal, who stays in the world to see every one die! But why should the King of Prussia precede the Elector-Palatine? To ward off, they say, all danger of that Juliers war which his Prussian Majesty had taken so strongly into his head. However, if people are not mistaken, the prince-royal, his successor, a very reasonable man and of great intelligence, will take a course that is conformable to glory and to reason. He loves letters and the fine arts, it is true; but his philosophy will lead him to reason, and he will not neglect either his forces or his rights. The King of Prussia leaves, they say, a magnificent treasure, — a mass of

savings amounting to one hundred and fifteen millions, kept, closely guarded, in a cellar, in which there is a hole, like that in a charity box, through which they throw in bags of gold and silver; and within the cellar are shelves on which the bags are ranged like books in a library. But the grand treasure must be that of Holland, where his Britannic Majesty sends so much English money; though they do say that, out of avarice, he turns it over himself in England and that he owns under different names three-fourths of the public funds.

Two persons, who are assiduously close to the dauphin, tell me in confidence that he is the worst-hearted child they ever knew; no attachment for his servants past or present; enjoying maliciously the misfortunes of others; proud, bold, rebellious, and a mind such as the fire and violence of his imagination foretells. These are so many menaces to the kingdom. They have not however, seen anything in him as yet to show vicious inclination. He makes little account of either father or mother, and the king, timid by nature, fears his son, and will not let the tutors threaten to complain of him.

[April 1.] M. Bachelier now goes openly and without mystery to M. de Breteuil, and has long conversations with him of an hour and two hours, as we foresaw. M. de Breteuil will now become the depositary of the king's secrets concerning his plans for the future ministry,—all counsels emanating from M. Chauvelin at Bourges and reaching the king through the said Bachelier. M. de Maurepas has done his best to be admitted into these secrets, and as he serves usefully to-day he is regarded as a friend. But he ought to reflect that he was among the first to declare for M. Chauvelin's dismissal, and that, solely from the desire to put in his place a tool of his own, M. Amelot. M. de Maurepas

has always, therefore, borne the stain in the Bachelier party, that he once worked against it, and even against Bachelier, to make him declare himself.

To return to M. de Breteuil; in the matter of the promotion of eight brigadier-generals and sixty-seven brigadiers he did all he could to bring things back to equity and to following the order of the service. He held out against the cardinal, and spoke vigorously to the king in presence of his Eminence, giving powerful arguments, so that the king said, "M. de Breteuil is right."

The news is confirmed that the English have taken Portobello in America, and have pillaged everything, razed the two forts, taken the best cannon and spiked the rest, amounting to more than one hundred pieces. They have also taken eight vessels that were in port, and carried off everything of value. As it is only two hundred leagues from Portobello to Jamaica, Admiral Vernon can get there in force at any moment, and even to Panama, and take Carthagena, Vera-Cruz and all the other fortified places; and, besides, they have just made an embarkation of eight thousand men, pressed in England, with which those English can conquer, if they choose, the whole of Spanish America. What a silly nation that Spanish nation is! While she is busying herself in Europe with foreign conquests, building palaces for the King of Naples, threatening Ireland with the Pretender, undertaking the siege of Port-Mahon to thwart Admiral Haddock, compelling Portugal to declare herself, all this while, I say, and amid her boasts of her advantages in war, and her capture of funds in the factories, behold! here is Portobello, her chief place, where she loads and unloads her galleons, taken by five hundred Englishmen! To what a state is a nation reduced when it has not a dozen men faithful enough to be governors of its West Indies without

favouring English smuggling, — for that is the whole foundation of this war.

By means of this conquest (abandoned, if you will, after razing the place) the English have now full freedom of commerce in America; at their ease they can everywhere inundate that land with European merchandise, and will do so cheaply. This is what is regarded as a great evil by modern politics, which founds all solid gains on the misfortunes of others. I ask why the King of Spain is not content with his tariff on the merchandise that goes in and out of Spain and with the product of his mines, leaving other nations to carry to his American subjects what they need, and do it cheaply. Gains founded on tyranny are not, as we see, blessed of God.

It is to be remarked that in repressing this smuggling in Spanish America everything is against his Catholic Majesty: 1st, the cupidity of the Spanish officers; a selfish nation, greedy of money in order to shine stupidly in their own country; 2d, the convenience of the American inhabitants, whether Indians or Spaniards born in that country; not that they want to have the English for their masters, but because they have great interest in seeing themselves delivered from Spanish tyranny over commerce. Thus they are charmed to see English smuggling, because it procures them merchandise at a cheap rate.

On that, what is to be hoped? What will be henceforth the defence of Spain in those countries? Have we a navy ready to take part? No. Our dawning navy ought not to get a shock which might dishonour it at starting. And what an expense for us such a sea-war!

[April, 1740.] Of late the king has talked of nothing but the history of the *rois faineants*, who would not govern for themselves. What does that mean? Does he not feel his

own state, or does he mean soon to pull himself out of it? This is how they talk at Court.

There is a great outcry against the cardinal for the shameful and dangerous inaction in which this country remains since the taking of Portobello by the English. Those insularies are seizing the whole commerce of America, and will soon seize that of the whole world; they have swarming colonies in North America; their Jamaica holds them in force between the chief places of the Spaniards; they do not seek to possess those places, but to do all the commerce they choose with them, in spite of prohibition. Little by little, they will accustom Europe to their universal usurpation of commerce; having ruined all the defences of Spain, intimidated the garrisons, razed the forts, carried off the artillery, they are now about to pierce the isthmus of Panama, obtain vast riches there and construct vessels in the South Sea.

The cardinal opposes to all this hesitations, mortifying laxity; not the slightest order has been given to protect Spain, *totis veribus*, as our honour, our duty, and our safety demand. We see now all the unskilfulness of a ministry which, able *obstare principiis*, has allowed the evil to grow to such a point and has even seemed to favour its progress. And now comes the horror of proposing an advantageous treaty of commerce for us with Spain, when the question was to succour her honourably. Terrible condition! to ask one's brother for his goods and favours by contract when we see him in the claws of his enemy, or rather our common enemy! Our provinces are suffering considerably in their manufactures from this injury to Spanish America; they feel and complain everywhere.

Conticuere omnes on the departure of the Spanish squadron from Cadiz, which picked up eight ships at Ferrol and eight at Santander, making in all twenty-eight vessels. The

Spaniards put the English famously on the wrong scent by feigning to attack Port-Mahon, which drew Admiral Haddock to Minorca, and left the seas free to the Spaniards to come out of Cadiz and go where they chose. It is thought they are aiming for Ireland, that the younger son of the Pretender is aboard, and that the young prince will first declare himself of the religion of that country, and then raise a rapid revolution in England in favour of the Stuarts.

Are we to remain with our arms crossed? The cardinal is capable of it. Still, they say that orders have just been given for our squadron at Toulon to leave port; and that the officers are all collecting there secretly; but who can believe our ministry capable of any stroke of courage? How long will the king permit this deplorable thing of letting the action be governed by an old imbecile who dishonours the king and the kingdom?

B—— told me the other day that the policy of M. Chauvelin and Bachelier was that all changes should be made at one time, and that it was neither from evangelical virtue nor as a means of persuading the king that M. Chauvelin had frequently caused it to be said to his Majesty, "Keep your cardinal to the end," but really from shrewdness and good sense, fearing that if the cardinal retired, the king would put a long interval before his, Chauvelin's, recall, dreading to kill the retired cardinal, and that during this period the ministers would anchor themselves securely on his Majesty.

Whoever knows well, as I do, the true grounds of the disgrace of M. Chauvelin will find in it complete resemblance to that of M. Fouquet, with this difference, that M. Chauvelin was an abler minister, more faithful, more laborious than M. Fouquet, and that the agents of his fall were less capable and less fortunate than M. Colbert, who was the author of that of Fouquet. In these two falls, Louis XIV., Louis XV.,

Cardinal Mazarin and Cardinal de Fleury were deceived by their dependants. Colbert coveted Fouquet's place. Hérault was born M. Chauvelin's enemy. Colbert was fortunate; he started from his unworthy accusation of Fouquet on the work of a great and prosperous ministry, lasting twenty-four years. Louis XIV. was never punished for that injustice; he began at that moment a brilliant and magnificent reign.

Fouquet had all the noble qualities of a great seigneur, if he had not the birth of one; although in fact he had claims to nobility by descent, in Bretagne. He thought nobly, he had a lofty soul, much mind, courage, and all the inclinations born of such a character. He had done marvels in the office of attorney-general to the parliament; he had risen to the ministry and there proved himself a man of resource and great expedients. A minister such as Cardinal Mazarin could bear only small men around him, — and this is true of Cardinal de Fleury. Nevertheless, having more intelligence than the latter, he admitted at first men of stronger stuff, whom, little by little, he came to distrust. Mazarin had drained the State, in the midst of its terrors, temerities, and rebellions; timid pilot he was ever seeking, as they say, to pluck the fowl without its shrieking; to get one crown, one hundred were charged to the people's pockets. With this he was extremely avaricious and niggardly; he mixed up his private affairs with those of the king; he fished in troubled waters; he evaded order instead of seeking and maintaining it in the rules and the administration of the royal treasury. Poor M. Fouquet was held accountable for all this disorder, though he preached continually against it; he proposed order and rules; he insisted upon them continually with Mazarin. It is even to be supposed that in this way he first displeased him. Thus he became, after Mazarin's death, the victim of the disorder to which he had

been a martyr. It is this that makes it odious to honest men to be employed under tyrants and with knaves. The base valets, the clerks who served under Mazarin in the finances gave themselves up entirely to the grasping cardinal and, rascals like himself, they pillaged the State, made profits for themselves and for the cardinal's hoard, and sapped poor Fouquet underhand.

I have said Fouquet had a lofty soul, and being born for a Court he came to it from the legal profession by frequenting great personages, from whom he did, undoubtedly, acquire defects. He liked ostentation, and certainly succeeded through Court intrigue, to which he did not sufficiently oppose that philosophy which accommodates itself to the times, retreating or resuming according as we are free to practise it. Every one likes what he thinks he can do successfully, and in which he sees he has acquired ability; Fouquet always followed the practices of the Court.

In all the storms he encountered from Cardinal Mazarin he took refuge in Court intrigue. He owed his vices and his faults to his enemies and his habits. He sought to win the great, and the means he took were not innocent. Thus, we find that he profited by the disorder in the finances and the want of rules in the administration of the Treasury to give presents to persons of influence and to help them to undertake enterprises. It is much, however, that he never increased his own property, and nothing marks more plainly his integrity.

They obliged him to borrow for the State; to advance money, and be security. He was born to great wealth; his office of attorney-general of the parliament was sold for sixteen hundred thousand *livres*. It was then the custom for the superintendents of finance to advance money to the State; they were accredited in this way. Therefore his

magnificent exterior, his expenditure in buildings strengthened his credit, so that he was seen to be very rich and people were glad to lend to him. In later times, finding himself pressed and threatened with the persecution that he met with after the death of Mazarin, his patience was driven to extremities and he put on paper a plan of resistance, which was found, and a great crime made of it. His military measures taken for the fortress of Belleisle, Concarneau, ships, cannon, naval actions, all that seems to us astonishing, but we must remember the customs of those days, when the governors of regions were well-nigh sovereigns, and also had teeth with which to bite. The royal authority was not perfected in the provinces as it has been since.

After the death of Mazarin, Colbert followed his aim; he found himself well installed in the king's mind by Mazarin's recommendation, and, in fact, he had all the materials ready and well-meditated for a better system, to which he joined great talents for the work. It is easy to shine by contrasts when liberty to act, instead of hindrance and distrust, make a great merit apparent. Fouquet claimed that he could equally well have corrected the disorders, and substituted great system and great ameliorations in the kingdom if they had given him time, and if he had had the confidence of a great king instead of the distrust of a vile minister; and I believe that he would have done so and done better still, for he had a soul far loftier than Colbert's, and consequently, more justice and more dexterity in governing Frenchmen.

Perhaps, however, he might have failed, by trying to mask his preceding faults. Everybody accuses him of doubting whether Louis XIV. would continue to apply himself to governing; he regarded it as a flash in the pan, and thus, they say, duped himself. He would not show the king the bottom of the sack; he had taken a taste for governing, and wanted

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Frederick the Great

fleets being dispersed. This operation could be rapid; we should give a Stuart to England, a tolerant Stuart, whom England would never have gained otherwise; the English would find they had lost all the great advantages stipulated for them in the Peace of Utrecht; we should re-establish Dunkerque; the Assiento of Spain¹ would be taken from them; we should make war to the death by sea and land; and what other neighbouring powers, denuded as they are, so miserable and so preoccupied, the Emperor exhausted, Savoie under restraint, the Empress busy with Sweden, what other power, I say, no longer being assisted by England's money, could thwart our attack?

But at bottom, we desire the good of England; in place of the exorbitant privileges of exclusive rights, we would leave them the common right of commerce and, to govern them, we would give them their legitimate king, who has no States elsewhere for which to pillage England and export her grease, and no foreign and Germanic interests in which to involve her.

Meantime misery is exhausting the kingdom; the scarcity of wheat this year will be much worse than that of last year, for the provinces of Picardy and Soissons, which were then our granary, lack wheat this year. Mortality is decimating our inhabitants; there is less money than there was a year ago, — that is to say, none.

[May 22.] The king has made us tremble by his cold; but all colds have a dangerous character this year; the poor are dying of them for want of succour; the rich languish but get well by dint of care. Perspiration checked by this villanous northwest wind and cold rains, at a season when the sun is at its hottest, is the cause. The king hunted

¹ An English company which had a monopoly of supplying negroes for the Spanish colonies. — FR. ED.

Saturday and took his stag near Rosny; he returned very weary, having taken hot and cold, and supped heavily. The next day, cough and some fever; they dare not bleed him, nor even speak to him on the subject. These spring colds are worse than those of winter, especially when one has escaped them so far.

Who knows of what crimes ambition and revenge may not be capable! If the queen became regent, though for a few years only, I see her surrounded by sinful and hypocritical women, such as the Duchesses de Villars, Mazarin, Contant; behind them all the Unigenitus bishops, intriguing and treacherous, Cardinal de Tencin, the Noailles, the crazy and ambitious Maréchal de Noailles, the Abbé de Broglie, Du Mesnil — these are they who would govern the State under a foreign and imbecile queen. Farewell all hope of purity and integrity! farewell that reign of Titus for which we hope under the government of Louis XV.

[May 26.] The king took good care of himself during his cold, and yet he looks somewhat changed, which is rather the effect of treatment than of the malady itself. He still keeps his chamber, has been bled twice, purged, and dieted; he wants to live. The old tyrant, on his side, is getting better and better, and younger instead of older at the age of eighty-nine. He has just had an inflammation of the eye, his tribute to the spring.

The King of England has gone to Hanover, which astonishes all Europe and makes the lower English classes say that he abdicates, for whoever quits a country loses it. It is much the contrary; he knows what he is about; he goes to enter upon new intrigues and make more sure of the emperor, the czarina, Prussia, and Denmark.

In France, the misery of the provinces increases; in every town, each bourgeois is ordered to feed one or two poor

persons, and to give them fourteen pounds of bread per week. In the single little town of Châtelleraut there were eighteen hundred poor persons on that footing the past winter, which will accustom our people to become do-nothings.

Let it not be said that this comes from the sterility of the earth, for the harvest of 1739 was not so bad, and the one in prospect for this year promises magnificent returns, but the poverty is greater. Last winter the collectors of the *taille*-tax exacted it with horrible rigour. But worse still: wheat crossed our frontiers to the relief of the Austrian provinces, and this, by permission of our Court; the more disastrous these exports were for the people, the more money they brought to the Orrys.

[May 31.] The king no longer coughs; a broth of turnips cured him; this broth was prepared by the hands of love, by Mme. de Mailly herself. His Majesty had a dressing-gown which annoyed him. Mme. de Mailly went out immediately, chose a charming stuff and had it made up during the night, and the next morning the king found it at his toilet. The king has given the tolls of the bridge of Neuilly to the lady; they amount to 20,000 *livres* a year; it is true that they have belonged for all time to the family of Hautefort; the period of their cession was about to end, but they might have been continued to the Marquis d'Hautefort, if there had been no favourite. I wish the mistress, being that of the king, should be favoured, but not by doing wrong to others. The regiment ci-devant Condé, given to the Chevalier de Mailly by taking it from young d'Argens, is another case. I do not like these things; they grieve me for love of my master; the mistress will soon be hated.

It is thought that after her, and even before her, the Comtesse de Toulouse will have the largest share of the king's favour; her character pleases him; she is a kindly woman

and affable, they say. If the king wants another mistress she is conveniently at hand; if his Majesty wants piety, she is pious; thus he would be suited on all hands. She has, they say, determined on pushing Grandville for the ministry; she has made him Councillor of State, and loves him much.

It is known that the true reason of the journey of his Britannic Majesty to Hanover is because Mme. de Walmoden, his mistress, is about to be confined, and her child must be born in Germany in order to make a great seigneur of him. Moreover, the king, seeing troubles at home, is glad to have them go to Walpole's account and let him suffer if evil comes of them; besides which, he puts upon us the ridicule of the great confidence he shows in our neutrality. The Duke of Argyle, who has had a quarrel with the king, has retired to Scotland, where he plays the devil to raise the kingdom and favour the Pretender.

They are striking at the Mint gold crowns of the value of a crown of six *livres*; and besides this new coin, more louis d'or and crowns of the same name and weight as the old ones, but with a finer imprint than that of Varin, and of the age the king now is. But these gold crowns, what swagger, what vanity in this air of Asiatic magnificence at a time when poverty is unexampled! Will they be monuments of present calamity, avarice, and financial pride?

M. Bignon, cousin of M. de Maurepas, arriving from Soissonnais, his intendancy, where he had gone to receive the Queen of Poland, has written letters of remonstrance on the miserable state of that province and on the abuses which take place in consequence. I know from him that M. de Maurepas has prescribed this conduct to him. He is not a worker, but he is a man on good terms with every one, of sound sense, liking details about human life, and having

very clean hands. He has boldly laid before the cardinal a strong accusation against M. de Séchelles, intendant of Maubeuge; he says that the estate of Vervins, belonging to Séchelles' niece, preserved, to his knowledge, large stores of wheat, and that this wheat was being slipped into Hainaut and the Low Countries all last winter; and for that reason Séchelles would not establish a chain of troops along the frontier as he, Bignon, had requested him to do. To this accusation the good cardinal replied in these very words: "But it is natural that every one should seek his own profit." A fine answer, truly!

M. Orry was boasting the other day, before the assembled Council, of the firmness with which he had taxed the communes of Bretagne more than was necessary, in order to make them pay so much a year on their debts assigned to the province. The communes, on the other hand, said that he ought to let the people breathe. He also said that in Languedoc and Bourgogne, and among the clergy he was carrying on the same operation.

I told him that was what was called in England a sinking-fund; and it was a very good thing in a prosperous country, where they could lay by certain sums to pay off debts to capital. But that when communities were pressed, as ours to-day, it was too much to pay up arrearages; and that this was the great folly advised by Duverney, which led to the overthrow of M. le Duc when, in 1725, the people being crushed down and dying of hunger, they held a *lit de justice* at which the king caused to be registered a quantity of edicts on taxes, and especially that of the *cinquantième*; to this was applied the fine argument that as nothing could fail in France except through the credit of the king, that credit should therefore be maintained by making a sinking-fund of the *cinquantième*, to be faithfully applied to extin-

guishing the king's debt; as if when one could not pay 5 the remedy was to make us pay 15!

Our administrators exhibit daily the abuse of the old maxims of public credit which they take awry; the proof is that, in applying them, things go to ruin. It is well to pay debts, but days of plenty must be awaited in which to do so. A little good sense and regard for circumstances would dictate this course; but when will the days of plenty come? Assuredly not under the ministry of MM. Fleury and Orry.

[June 3.] They have just brought twenty-five thousand bullocks from Ireland, which will cost a great deal. M. le Nain, intendant of Poitou, and M. de Tourny, intendant of Limoges, have represented, on leaving Paris for their departments, that those two provinces, already so poverty-stricken, would be definitively ruined if this purchase of beeves took place; that they could no longer pay the *taille*, and the difficulty of feeding the animals would complete the work of rendering both departments frightful deserts. They each stated in their memorial, without the other's knowledge, that their provinces were still in a condition to furnish Paris with meat at ordinary prices, though poverty had somewhat checked the sending of it; that it was help to the people themselves that was needed,—their relief by the lessening of taxes, and by some loans of money, and not the annihilation of their earnings which was proposed.

The controller-general held firm; or rather he paid no attention; his course was taken. But why this stupid obstinacy? Before sending so much money out of the kingdom ought we not to exhaust all other expedients—relief, encouragement, loans? I learn that M. de Maurepas has given the same advice to all the other intendants, namely, to depict the frightful state of their provinces, and

cry aloud to the cardinal against Orry's untruthful reports, and against their negligence in meeting the occasion.

[June 11.] We have just heard in Paris of the death of the King of Prussia, which took place June 2. M. de Valory, our minister at Berlin, has written me the details by the courier whom he despatched with the news; he also writes me a great eulogy of the first steps of his son and successor [Frederick the Great].

This prince has great intelligence, merit in all directions, much application, and philosophy. *He will do what he has to do.* That is a great point. He will have soldiers for fighting; instead of which the late king, with his tall men, never knew how to give a blow from the shoulder, thanks to his extreme irresolution and cowardice. He leaves great wealth to his son. The latter will love learned men and the arts; he will seek peace, but with glory; he is eager, active, full of honour. Beware lest such a prince should give us many a knot to untangle if we oppose his designs! Without liking war by nature, he can be led to it by a point of honour. His rights are of a kind to need war to sustain and strengthen his dawning greatness in the midst of jealous enemies, neighbours who hem him in, and before an oppressing emperor. He will be made indignant by the vexations borne on all sides by the Protestant communion.

He will find in the arrangements of his father much opportunity for becoming a great power in Europe. By changing his giants into warriors he can make a considerable saving, enough to put his troops into activity. His natural tastes and his principles will lead him to render his people happy and to make the arts flourish and especially belles-lettres, which he loves. But it will be shameful in him, having justice and honour, if he abandons the Juliers affair, begun and so far advanced in preparation by his father. The universe

accession to the throne, that it is really incomprehensible. He has written the most beautiful letter to Voltaire, telling him to write to him as usual as to a man who was not a king. He has given freedom to commerce. He has written to M. Chambrier, his minister in Paris, to send him Vaucanson, — who made our wonderful automatic flute-player, and whom we have so neglected to reward and encourage. Chambrier is making a bargain with him, and we shall let him go.

[June 24.] The Duc de La Rochefoucauld has said to the king that his Majesty was perhaps ignorant of the state of the provinces; that it went beyond all that could be said of it; that this was forgotten amid the plenty of the capital; that all is glossed over here; that the ministry strive only to hide the ills of the kingdom and make a show of abundance in Paris, but that the provinces where so much misery existed last year, were doubly miserable this year, and that those provinces which were better off last year were now equal in misery with the others. The king answered that he knew all that, and that he also knew that his kingdom had diminished one sixth during the past year.

I have had a great source of grief. I am told on all sides that my brother envies my sort of reputation, namely, a certain general esteem for constancy to my friends, for good sense and a desire for the public good; but more especially for solid and lasting ties, which seem likely to put me in office at the cardinal's death. No doubt he avoids speaking ill of his own brother, but he has tools so adroit that malignant talk is disseminated against me, the source of which is recognizable, especially to the persons who report them, chiefly the low valets of the House of Orléans.

That nothing may be wanting to my pain, I hear, with certainty, that these manœuvres are discovered, have reached our chief master, and will grievously recoil upon their author,

so that he will be upon his guard against him and against all that comes from him. Lately the Duc d'Orléans has seemed to be against me; and to have received bad impressions when M. de Balleroy and the Duc de Chartres told him that the latter admitted me to hold political conversations with him in order to accustom him to speak on public affairs. The Duc d'Orléans seemed to think me a man of little worth, and said that all he believed of me was that I had a good stomach, for which he honoured me. The Duc de Chartres seemed troubled that his father knew me so ill, and at first he threw the blame on my brother. I defended him as best I could; but there will always remain this blame: that he did not make me better known to the Duc d'Orléans, being well worth that trouble, as the young prince said.

The cardinal still thinks actually of being pope; hence the horrible muddle in the conclave and its extraordinary duration. The whole Court of Vienna is against this project; the Emperor alone likes the cardinal. It is thought that the admission of the Imperial troops into Corsica will be the fee for the bargain. What is betraying your country called?

[July 4.] Cardinal de Polignac assures me that this papacy of the cardinal is an impossibility; that the Italian faction will always carry the election; and that even if the three factions, France, Spain, and Naples and Austria united for this purpose they would only have thirty votes, and the Italian faction would hold firm. There are now present at the conclave fifty-three cardinals, which is the same as fifty-four; two-thirds are required for an election, which is thirty-six, and a third (eighteen votes) for exclusion; so that the combined factions can succeed in excluding, but never in electing.

Two courtiers were talking confidentially at Versailles yesterday, and they said what follows: "When one asks

what the news is at Court, people answer, there is none at all; and they are right in point of fact; all is lethargy, nothing goes on, nothing is done. There is no comprehending the king any longer; he lets everything go to the cardinal, and the cardinal does absolutely nothing; which might arise from want of power, though he appears to have sole power."

Faith is tempted at every moment to fail on the hopes we have conceived of the king personally. He lives in an inexcusable debauchery and obscurity with his mistress; he seems to have no good time except that in which he is alone with Mme. de Mailly at Choisy, La Muette, or Rambouillet. M. de Beringhen [chief equerry] has prevented, as much as he could, Mme. de Mailly from sleeping at La Muette, of which he is governor. At Choisy there are eight rooms, and Madame de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille sleep there openly. The king never speaks now of the state of his kingdom; he repeats, they say, like a parrot, word for word, what the cardinal tells him. They are going to represent at Court a ballet with music and words by M. de La Trémouille; this will attract the approbation of Voltaire, who constantly preaches that our seigneurs ought to concern themselves with art and letters; he will be much pleased.

That poor M. de Maurepas is in bad repute with every one at Court, for he has put his foot into such a quantity of shoes. He sees nothing correctly, and lets himself be led into things that are ridiculous, and offensive to his Majesty. The king dislikes him and will not keep him long when he is master. Lazy masters like above all others sincere and trusty men; whoso misleads them once loses them forever.

[July 9.] My son has just left college; he now lives with me; he studies. He was very delicate in childhood, and still is, though healthy at present, and free from mala-

dies. He eats little, from want of appetite and without effort at moderation; what he eats is only trash, — pastry and milky food; he hates butcher's meat. He has not grown since he was sixteen years old, and is not as tall as I am, who am only of medium height; he likes no bodily exercise.

From his infancy all his powers have passed to his brain, but I do not see that anything has gone to his imagination, or his senses, or to that most subtle and laudable of the senses, the heart. His heart is good, but it is not a feeling one; it says nothing to him; his heart is dull, the faculty is dead within him. He likes the theatre, and has acquired a vast erudition on the subject; but at comedies he only laughs with his mind, and at tragedies he never weeps; at the most touching scenes he admires the art of the author, and feels nothing, — so he says himself.

All this comes from the fact that the poor boy has no sensibility of the senses, and that all his wits have gone to the brain, where they work and have great power. He has a prodigious memory; he thinks, he judges, he distinguishes, he conceives, he is eager for knowledge. He began young, and is far advanced in mind and in acquirement. I have turned his studies to modern things, to recent history and matters more within range of society; inclinations which he has had from birth have carried on this system to a good choice of reading; that is to say, what is chiefly in the mode of to-day.

With it all, I see in him a mediocre imagination, for he is not absolutely without any; he is not sterile, but not fruitful; he never feels himself inspired; he never wants to write; he was a whole week with me without asking for an ink-stand, satisfied to roam my library and read the whole time. He never feels the need to write verses; I have known him do so in childhood, but it was always from imitation, copy-

ing, and without spirit, without taste; their chief fault was want of thought.

This is what it is to lack sense through feebleness. He will have neither taste, nor imagination, nor pleasures; all will go by mind; and his mind will merely judge, without that prompt, natural, loftier method which we call taste; his mind will be a combiner and comparer, without genius, which is the inspiring, revealing divinity that generates the sublime. He will never have any ideas but those of others; he will gather them in rich abundance; he may produce a few little fruits, but they will be small and dry, no flowers,—in short, he will have no pleasures. With this, his nature is gentle, happily not crabbed. His reflections have led him to a certain urbanity in order not to displease, and, without the desire of pleasing, he is and will be a man of worth; he will never waste his means, from lack of imagination and passion.

This will make a pedant, if care is not taken, but a pedant without harshness or obstinacy. He is diffuse, and cannot make an analysis. His notes are longer than the text, from the quantity of ideas he has received and which he faithfully preserves all together. I forgot to say that he has no joy; neither has he any sadness.

As to usefulness, he will make what is called a good subject, without being a great subject. The first suffrages of his fellows will be for him and will produce great effect; but, little by little, the tie of society lacking,—I mean that amiable bond that makes us interested in one another, the love or friendship (they are the same thing) that lights up chaos according to a divine mythology,—*that* lacking, as I have said, my son will not be hated, but will never be loved; especially when, growing colder himself, he will give to society only what a dictionary gives, just ideas without novelty.

He will be a good judge, a virtuous intendant, a compe-

tent administrator, a good preserver of the state of things when it is good, but never a reformer, gifted with a few views, but common ones. Those views will, however, be accurate, and that is much. Speaking generally, he will be virtuous, committing no follies; he will preserve his property, and acquire more.

Is not that a son such as every father must desire? Beyond that are chimeras with great risks and grievous chances. It is still possible to turn him towards the things in which he is most deficient, in order that he may acquire something of them. He may catch a few passions which will draw him a trifle from his apathy, and warm him a little. But education does no more than turn the nose to the path, it never compels to follow it.

[July 13.] Everything at Court is becoming a new subject of speculation, or rather, of despair. For the last year the king has the interests of his kingdom less at heart, and abandons himself more to the old and imbecile control of the cardinal. He had given some signs of being master and solicitous about public affairs; he did of his own accord certain admirable things, all of them without his minister; he gave some shocks to the irksome old man, each tending to the desired end, namely, to disgust him and induce him to resign. But now, instead of that, we have seen for the last six months enough to lay on Louis XV. the charge of being another Louis XIII., *quod Deus avertat*, for Fleury is not Richelieu! But this parallel of our king, who is dear to us, whom I love with all my heart, to an imbecile prince, poor in spirit, with all the virtues of a valet and not one of a master, is absolutely false. The king has within himself the virtues which make a happy reign; he has intellect, a good mind; he is an honest man, and consistent; he likes honest men. He has been put upon his guard against the rancour,

the pettiness of spirit, and the other defects of the cardinal. It is much to have sown these first impressions, from which, with one of his Majesty's character, there is no return.

And yet, in the midst of all that is happening in public affairs, the king seems to idle and to discourage himself from doing anything at all. He scarcely gives a few moments of the day to business, and then with evident regret; he multiplies his journeys, he is always on the road; he does nothing, he no longer reads; he is seen to be wasting his time all day long. *Totus in augis versatur*. Bachelier tormented him a whole week to sit down at his desk and write a few signatures; he was twelve days unwilling to sign a single paper.

How shall we explain this increasing abandonment of all the affairs of the kingdom, at a time, too, when their need is greatest? As for me, I can find no other reason than this: he is like a card-player with a miserable partner, who plumes himself on being very clever, and in that situation he can only await the end of the game impatiently; scarcely will he hold his own cards in his hand. Poor Bachelier, who is in the secret of everything, talks less than ever, even to his best friends; but he is often seen to be furious, desperate at the state of things, writhing his arms at what he sees and hears. He has made H—— write to me that if, in my present distress, I need money, he can procure for me as much as I wish. I have answered, with many thanks, that in spite of the cardinal and his seizure of my income, I have enough to go on with until next Easter. It is certain that this offer came from high places, from the master of all; which puts my affairs in a smiling condition.

The King of Prussia is attracting the greatest praise for his behaviour during the few weeks that have elapsed since his father's death. God grant that he may become an object

of emulation to our king, and that a monarch of twenty-eight years of age may inspire one of thirty with the duties of royalty and the glory of working himself. While he was still only the prince-royal, King Frederick wrote memorials on the interests of princes; they have been in the hands of Mme. du Châtelet, who is not too discreet; she has shown them to friends, who have shown them to others.

People say that the ecliptic leans more this year towards the equator, and if it continues to turn in that way, we shall, in a few years, have the same climate in France that they have in Sweden. We learn that in Rome, and especially in Naples there has been unprecedented cold last winter, which continued into spring. Here we are now in midsummer and we have fires all the time; in the middle of the day the sun is hot, but morning and evening one dies of cold. The wind is due north; hence dryness of the chest and stoppage of perspiration, which are causing everywhere dangerous illnesses. All our ministers are ill at once; M. Amelot with a rooted fever that never leaves him for a moment. M. de Maurepas is the most in danger; they are not able to cut his fever; it is continued, and very strong in its paroxysms; his illnesses are never moderate; they have bled him in the arm, and this morning in the foot. For the ministry, it would be the loss of the only man it has to-day.

VII.

1740—1741.

[July 24.] Every day brings to persons without prejudice new features in the king's character which it is important to understand. But it is necessary to have eyes that are unoccupied and, above all, devoid of impatience.

I had heard the buildings at Compiègne much blamed. I am here now; I examine them; nothing denotes otherwise than that the king knew the obstacles, has surmounted them, and carried out his object. That object certainly is a constant change of residence. The king is young, likes hunting and excursions. He finds at Compiègne the finest forest for hunting that he has in his possession, and he wanted to have a habitable hunting-lodge; he is contented with the habitable; he wanted also to have his mistress; for that he had to have other ladies, and after them, the ministers, and finally our Council. He built houses here and there, at various angles, following the streets of Compiègne. The houses of the ministers are sufficient and convenient; they are near the château and are all panelled; what need of anything else? Throughout the place, and for everybody alike, are habitable and agreeable lodgings, good air and health, magnificent promenades; the terrace is a rampart thus applied, fine view, and the river. I like this simplicity and convenience; I like to see things in keeping with the place where they are; the conventional is wearisome. It is useless to say that the beautiful would not have cost more, that the ministers ought to have been lodged in the old château;

that his Majesty ought to have built himself a new château, worthy of a king, which might have cost twenty millions. His Majesty wished for the enjoyment at once and more quickly than such arrangements would allow. I like the wisdom that sees where things lead, the economy that saves millions in these difficult times, and accommodates itself to needs. There will soon be little left to do at Compiègne; a *place d'armes* for the guard, and a garden before the house, and that is all. We shall be fortunate if the king keeps to this and laughs at his critics.

People insist that the king has only obstinacy in place of firmness, but he certainly has reserved to himself some decisions which have been correct. They did not want the dauphin to come to Compiègne, because some children here have had the small-pox; there was courage in braving the terrors of the nurses. Still, it is difficult to comprehend the character of the king; the cleverest and most decided minds are at sea about it. If his Majesty has arranged the retirement of the cardinal via the papacy with the secrecy and persistency which I attribute to him, then he is already one of the great men of France. But if we are to believe those who see him and judge him he is inconceivably weak; he changes his purposes, he is flaccid in all things; Bachelier is no longer influential; this head-servant has just had a quarrel with little Lebel, another servant, and the king has not supported him; Bachelier is depressed and says nothing; the king is more subjugated than ever, they say, to the cardinal. One passes one's life here at Compiègne in watching the utter abandonment by the king of the affairs of the kingdom; in thinking him another Louis XIII., and lower still, and yet, at the same time, seeing in him certain traits which proclaim one of the great men that history lauds. If he meditates showing himself as we all imagine

he will after the death, or retirement, or papacy of the cardinal, surely no one was ever so impenetrable.

[August 2.] The king has had the kindness to play a trick on the cardinal in my behalf. The latter had suspended all payments to me from the royal treasury, as restitution for the little I had received for the embassy to Portugal, and this from unjust resentment which every one has blamed, inasmuch as it cost me over twenty thousand crowns to prepare for the mission on which his Eminence embarked me. When the matter of the ordering of the pensions for 1739-1740 came up, mine was for the month of June and my brother's for the same month, and the king on signing the orders, the cardinal being present, called out, name by name, the receiving parties. When he came to ours, he justly and expressly left out that of my brother, and signed mine for ready money on the royal treasury.

It followed that this order was given into my hand by M. de Maurepas, who is one of my friends. Mesnard, his head-clerk, told me I had only to draw the money all hot, and Gedion, one of the guards of the royal treasury, a dependant of my late father, has taken upon himself to get this sum of money for me by a secret agent. Certainly this little trick is very flattering for me on the part of the master.

We learn that the English fleet under Admiral Norris, consisting of twenty-five ships of the line, has sailed, with eight thousand five hundred men to disembark. They have that splendid vessel "The Victory," of 112 guns. This fleet will hold in check our squadron at Brest, and burn, they say, that of the Spaniards which is at Ferrol, an unsafe port, where it can be easily bombarded.

The great folly that we have committed is putting our two squadrons in roadsteads, whence they must retire, one to

Toulon, the other to Brest, especially the latter. There, we have only a dozen vessels of the line and one frigate. "What would happen," said an able man yesterday, "if under present circumstances the Elector palatine should die? The present King of Prussia is going to put all his powers to policy and greatness; who can say how far he will go, while there is no longer a single mind in Europe at the head of affairs? He could easily carry off half of Juliers and the Berg before the cardinal comes to a decision about anything. Conceive of a nation like this twirling its thumbs during all these great affairs!"

We have another very terrible extremity to expect; the calling in of the debts to the treasury will become this autumn and winter an insurmountable difficulty, it will pauperize our provinces. And so the burden of my song is ever: shame without, misery within.

My brother has quarrelled irretrievably with the Duc d'Orléans; he has insulted him to his face. On arriving at Compiègne he asked for a conversation with me, and told me (concealing some things, however) that he had obtained the intendancy of Paris without saying a word of it to the Duc d'Orléans, who is his master, and who feels himself outraged by this impertinence. He went at once to see the prince, who received him very ill. My brother did not tell me how much he was mauled, only that he was ill-received.

As they were parting, the Duc d'Orléans spoke of softening their separation as much as he could, and mentioned in the first place his desire to give me the post, that of his chancellor. It has now been agreed upon not to make this arrangement until next September, and not to place me in full exercise of the office till January 1, so that my brother may have ample time to make up his accounts as treasurer and finish apportioning the shares of the Orléans family.

Some time later, I went to the supper of the Duc d'Orléans at Fontainebleau; after supper he made me stay alone with him in his cabinet, and said as follows: "Monsieur, your brother has told me of the engagement that you are willing to make with me." I answered as gratitude and modesty dictated. He then said the arrangement would begin on the first of next January, and meantime we would continue not to mention it. I wrote at once to my brother to inform him that the matter was settled.

The Duc d'Orléans is at any moment on the point of retiring from the world, no attraction retaining him there any longer. He sees the Duc de Chartres a man, strong and doing well; he thinks himself no longer necessary to him and that he may now say *nunc dimittis*. A man in the intimate confidence of all this has confided everything to me, presuming that I need to know all in the post I am about to occupy. This devout prince has more of madness than devotion; in his misanthropy he hates men, and those he endures enjoy only a passing tolerance which he himself does not expect to last. He knows himself sufficiently well to be aware of the inconstancy of his likings. Sometimes he talks reasonably and eloquently, but oftener he wanders from the point and falls into veritable unreason; and this unreason goes even into minutiae, which proves that his mind is of small calibre. He thinks he has discovered that his tastes and his talents are for criticism and for the ancient oriental languages; he spends his time at Sainte-Geneviève discussing with certain erudite fathers Hebrew or Chaldaic passages, or the punctuation of a Hebrew verse. At present he is engaged in fixing the exact situation of the Garden of Eden.

His piety is not consistent; he lets out at times suggestions of a policy too independent of religion, as for instance, when he wanted the Duc de Penthièvre to enter the Church,

be made a cardinal, and loaded with benefices, without examining his vocation. As for me, I should be of opinion that he ought not to enter the Church to get possession of the property of others, and especially that of the poor; that neither should he marry and perpetuate a race of bastards with false and precarious honours; but take a pretty mistress, well paid, and incite to that course MM. de Dombes and d'Eu [sons of the Duc du Maine].

The Duc d'Orléans is the son of a mother of much intelligence, who never said anything without a design, but little to be trusted, vindictive, and with constant passions: *mater Gracchorum, grande supercilium*. The quartering of Mortemart brought to the son a certain madness; and there is every appearance that he is the son of Fervaques Bullion, where there was often insanity. All this has been in the mind of the poor prince; everything in him is explained by madness, devout madness, and enmity to society.

With that, he has become on his guard and very touchy about his mother's empire over him; he tries to escape it in every way and is continually on the defensive. He is also very sensitive on the subject of the succession to the throne, desiring to guard the stipulated right against the birthright of the Spanish branch. As to this, he would like to do what in him lies, but he cannot, he says, attend to the duties of a prince of the blood; his taste for retirement and study are too strong for it; and he adds to this the disgust he feels at the Council of State, where they deliberate only on things already decided, and where nothing is read but the "Gazette;" for which reasons he declines to give good advice which he knows will not be followed.

The same person who told me the above said also: "M. le Duc de Chartres ought not to be considered as a mere prince of the blood, to procreate other princes, make himself agree-

able to the *noblesse*, and live in the delights procured by rank, wealth, and idleness. No, he has other things to do; he may soon be called to the throne. The king has only one son, the dauphin, not yet married, and he ought to regard the Duc de Chartres as another Duc d'Anjou. What, then, ought the young man to do? Please the king, behave to him with great respect, and please the dauphin as well."

The king ought certainly, from this point of view, to make him his son-in-law, give him the honours of a son of France, and strengthen in the eyes of Europe the stipulated rights [under the "renunciations"], which would reassure her. If this were done the Orléans branch would have all Europe with it. The Duc de Chartres ought to behave with great dignity, and the most should be made of his character, which is not caressing but solid. He will please wherever he is known, because he will be respected. He ought to give satisfaction to the nobles as occasions arise, and at times help them in some matters secretly; above all, he ought to check the influence of the Spanish ambassadors at our Court, and that of their attendants; but in all things preferring the good of the kingdom he may one day possess, when our interests are mingled with those of Spain, as to-day in the war between Spain and England. The Duc d'Orléans has always been of opinion in the Council that we ought to support Spain in this war. We must suppose that the marriage of Madame Séconde to the Duc de Chartres will not be accomplished without continual tergiversations of the cardinal who, not willing to do anything for Spain in the present war, is also unwilling to offend her in exterior things, as this marriage would do.

My brother possesses at present the whole confidence and friendship of the cardinal, since his Eminence has succeeded in giving him the intendancy of Paris; that puts him far on

the way to be controller-general in place of M. Orry, who fulfils that office so ill. It also tends to ruin M. Chauvelin more and more and prevent his return; he having no greater enemy than my brother.

[August 29.] Here is the pope elected and he is an Italian (Prospero Lambertini, Benedetto XIV.). They tell me that for the last six weeks the cardinal had given up hopes of it, but before that he hoped it, and had lured the king to do so. The violence of the two parties in the conclave is to be attributed to the French and German cardinals, neither of whom would yield to the other. It is thought at Court that, this affair having failed, the king will drop back into the signs of disgust he showed formerly to Cardinal de Fleury; they were only suspended, and merely gave way to an affected deference founded on this hope of the papacy. Already his Majesty is beginning to rove and fly about more than ever. He was to have spent the whole of September at Versailles and give himself up to work; but they now think he will not stay there five whole days. The trips to Choisy and La Muette multiply, that to Fontainebleau is hastened by a week; his Majesty flees the cardinal, seeing the evils of his administration.

[September 16.] Things are coming to a crisis: famine in the interior of the kingdom; Paris about to lack bread, which grows dearer day by day, riots everywhere, the provinces at their last gasp, and still the *tailles* are increased and the kingdom being depopulated. The English, Spanish, and Dutch are driving us to war; a formidable English fleet has left their ports, and ours are forced to put to sea; the cardinal is at an end of his tergiversations which have brought nothing but dishonour to the nation. He no longer knows where he is, and people expect at any moment the news of his voluntary retirement. Sunday, Monday, and

Tuesday he shut himself up suddenly at Issy, and would not suffer any one to enter the place. I know persons who had business with his secretary and Barjac, who could speak to them only in their carriage, and the two men said they were all locked in and that their brains were turning in the depths of the seminary with their dear master. What was he doing? Was he writing? was he ill? was he burning papers? That is what no one yet knows.

Fear is felt for next Wednesday, September 21. There is no bread in Paris, except some damaged flour which has arrived and is being parched. They are working day and night at the mills in Belleville to make over this old decayed flour. The people know it, and the cry is everywhere that the government wants to poison them. All are rising, and everything is to fear. The danger is that on Wednesday floods of people may rush to Issy, where the cardinal is, or even to Choisy, where the king is. The two villages are close to Paris, and hunger knows no law.

[September 23.] They have sent for quantities of wheat; two thousand hogsheads are arriving from Havre; and more is ordered from Sicily and Dantzic. If only it comes in time; but the fear is, as winter is approaching, that the rivers may rise and the sea be too boisterous; yet, only that provision can be relied on if the supply should fail suddenly in Paris. Horrible depredations are being committed in the ministry of finance; quantities of passports have been given for foreign parts since the height of this calamity, either by M. Orry, or M. Fulvy, their mistresses and minions; everywhere is favour given to improper and criminal enrichment. The people know this, and all is ready for revolt. Bread grows dearer here by a sou a day; no merchant dares to bring in his wheat. On Wednesday, the market being almost in revolt, there was no bread after seven in the morn-

ing. The commissaries went about haranguing the people and telling them that the controller had come expressly to Paris to consult with M. de Marville; on which the people cried out: "Hey, the dogs! we have only to set fire to that Orry's house and burn him and his people, and we shall have bread. It is that old dog of a cardinal who hinders labourers from working, and that is what makes us go without bread."

The king stopped on Sunday at Issy to see the cardinal on his way to Choisy. He passed through the faubourg Saint-Victor; it was known, and the people collected in masses shouting — not "Vive le roi!" but "Misery! misery! bread! bread!" The king was mortified, and on reaching Choisy he dismissed all the labourers in his gardens, which he did from goodness of heart, feeling scandalized at incurring such unnecessary expense while there was so much misery about him. He wrote that night to the cardinal and told him what he had done; the cardinal wrote back, praising his good heart, but representing that he must take back the workmen, otherwise he was depriving them of their subsistence.

[September 25.] All is crumbling on every side. They know not how to provide for the subsistence of Paris until the wheat expected from Sicily arrives; as for that from Dantzic, they say now it is held back by the King of Poland. On the other side, war is at our heels; the English nation desires to harm us even more than she desires harm to the Spaniards. Surely, all this is enough to give the king mortal anxiety.

The king heard yesterday of a horrible thing which has happened close to Choisy—a riot in Bicêtre [the mad-house]. They lessened the food of the poor people there confined from three quarters of bad bread to half a pound. They all revolted and overcame the guards; numbers have

escaped and are coming to Paris. All the patrols and the mounted police are called out in order of battle against the poor wretches, with guns, bayonets, and sabres; forty or fifty bodies have been counted on the ground, and the riot was not over yesterday morning.

The great secret of the Orléans family was confided to me to-day. It concerns the marriage of the Duc de Chartres. The Duc d'Orléans is absolutely resolved upon it; two motives impel him: first, the desire for his own retirement; secondly, his piety, which makes him fear that the Duc de Chartres may take a mistress. The great object is that he should marry Madame Henriette, the next younger sister of Madame Infanta, married last year to the Infant Don Philip. It has always been seen that the cardinal was opposed to this; nevertheless, the Duc d'Orléans, following good advice, addressed the king himself about it. At first his Majesty was inclined to it, then he slackened, and finally gave a species of negative, and the Duc d'Orléans could say no more. The Duc de Chartres then spoke to the king while hunting, and made him a little harangue as follows: "Sire," he said in a low voice from horse to horse, "I have had a great hope; your Majesty has not taken it wholly from my father; it is to find in your Majesty a father as well as a master. I would contribute to the happiness of Madame Henriette, who would thus remain in France with your Majesty. Am I permitted to hope for this?" On which the king leaned over to the young prince and pressed his hand sadly, twice; which meant a positive refusal.

It is known since, from sure sources, that it is the cardinal who has the heart to bar this marriage. He wishes to marry Madame to the Emperor as soon as the Empress is dead; the latter is all swollen up, and they say she has not six months to live. The Emperor must already have made sure of this.

"It will be a fine thing," the cardinal has said, "for the House of France to raise that of Austria, which is now regarded as extinct." The sentiment is generous, but too forced to be much support to the cardinal's ministry.

[September 27.] What fools, worse than sheep, courtiers are! They see just what the powers choose them to see! Fear leads them more than hope; and evidence has none of its rights at a Court. Certainly one could find few ministries worse than our present one; and it should be judged the more severely because it is not great mishaps, disappointments, or disasters which have produced our misery; the weakness and shame of France to-day is from pure incompetence joined to frightful insensibility to the public woe.

In Paris men are more republican and more true. I go to the Court at Fontainebleau; there I find everything regarded as fine, even the dearness of bread. "The king heard no more cries of famished people as he passed through Paris," they say. "No more dishevelled women have stopped the cardinal's carriage. There was only one leg broken in the Bicêtre riot. The controller-general has given the best of orders about the dearness of bread. Such a quantity of wheat is coming that soon there will be too much in Paris, and it will get too cheap. The English fleet is afraid of ours; it returns to port constantly; ours has joined that of Brest and that of Toulon; it is going to Cadiz, thence to America to bring back galleons in triumph. We are on the best terms with the English ministry; we shall declare peace in six weeks; we shall threaten Holland if she dares to arm against us. The English nation is crushed down by Walpole; all revolution is impossible against this ministry; we govern everything; we have subjected Spain to our will and to the fear of our power. The Emperor relies upon us; we are luring him to marry Madame on the death of the Empress."

We must believe from such discourse of such delusions that the king is held in the shameful chains of the cardinal. I see nothing but complete blindness which can explain to me my king. I find his best servants discouraged, and soon they will sincerely believe that the king is beneath confidence. Insensible to the public misery, lazy, more possessed than ever by his old tutor, incapable of anything, he amuses himself, he laughs, he flutters about, he hunts, he reflects on nothing.

And yet the cardinal has become odious to the whole kingdom. Let not this be compared to the hatred and the cabals of the nobles against Cardinal Mazarin, nor to the firmness of Anne of Austria in sustaining him. Mazarin conducted gloriously the affairs of the kingdom without, and within it was not injured except by a few taxes the more to parliament. It was the slyness and knavery of Mazarin that shocked the French. But all that is happening to-day fills the nation, and justly, with despair; it is enervated, it is being annihilated; none but the farmer-generals are still living.

[September 29.] It has been confided to me that Madame Henriette and the Duc de Chartres love each other passionately. They were allowed, and even encouraged, to do so from childhood; the powder took fire easily, and now it is a question of quenching it for fear of explosion. Nevertheless, they know what obedience they owe to the will of a king and father. As they have grown up, reason has grown too; but love also has grown between two young persons of the same age, brought up as if destined for each other. The king will make them infinitely unhappy if he marries Madame elsewhere, as that vile cardinal is constantly pushing him to do. This is how romances begin. When the king answered the Duc de Chartres so sadly, the poor prince,

returning to his governor, choked and sobbed. The Duc d'Orléans then reverted to the Bavarian marriage, but the answer being unfavourable, the Duc de Chartres is relieved and gay ever since Sunday, when he heard of it.

But it was the king himself who encouraged the Duc de Chartres to seek Madame; he approved of their love, and he told them positively they could think of it, and then, by degrees, he has been brought to refuse it. He is really more desirous than ever of the marriage, but he sees that the cardinal is against it, and puts off the affair until the time when it will depend on himself alone. In short, all things refer themselves more and more to the character of the king, and that character becomes more and more problematical,—or rather, it is not so at all in the eyes of nine-tenths of the Court. They think the king an imbecile who will never be worth anything. The cardinal makes him tremble, and casts him into the insensibility that he wants. What a Richelieu is this minister? Is Louis XV. to Louis XIII. what Fleury is to Richelieu? No, I think not. The moment is approaching when the king will govern for himself; or rather will choose ministers such as he needs, and will work with even balance among the six.

I admit that it needs the faith of Abraham to believe this. Every day the dilemma increases, and its propositions are more contrasted, and more extreme: *either the king is much, or the king is nothing.*

M. de Breteuil tells me that M. Orry does not know where to turn in the matter of provisions. He has written a threatening letter to the intendant of Soissons telling him he must send wheat to Paris, although that department is dying with hunger. He sent one of his clerks to buy wheat at Soissons, which carried it up to an excessive price in that department and the quantity needed for sowing the earth will be lack-

ing. He has also taken a quantity of wheat from the purveyors of the army, threatening them in the same manner. M. de Breteuil complains of the risk the troops will run from this if the Elector palatine should die and the army be required to move suddenly into the Juliers region. M. Orry, when he talked to him about it, stammered and did not know what he said.

Charmazel, the queen's head-steward, is ill with vexation; he told me in confidence that she made him miserable with her fretfulness; that his duties taking him to her twice a day, he was the sink into which were poured all the ill-humours that often took possession of her, especially during the weeks when Mme. de Mailly is in waiting; he says that the queen is always on the watch to find out who are friends to that lady and who are not, and if she hears the slightest thing, he has to bear very cruel speeches, for a man who respects himself.

[October 4.] The king rose very early yesterday morning and started with Mme. de Mailly and Mme. de Vintimille for the forest of Fontainebleau to see the rut of the stags; but unfortunately they did not fight and lock horns before them, they were only heard belling. Such are the royal pastimes; meanwhile the cardinal is continuing to ruin the State.

[October 10.] One of the palace ladies tells me that it is the queen's fault that the king has taken a mistress; she behaved to him like a haughty prude. No one in the world had ever less mind than the queen; there is nothing of her; she is only what she sees others be; the force of example is stronger on her than on any one; she saw that in France it was good style to disdain your husband; she assumed that style. She used to say: "What! always pregnant, always lying-in!" And she put the king

under long fasts on pretence of her health; disdaining that which she now bitterly regrets. In the matter of society, the king, at the beginning of their marriage, wanted to play cards with the queen in the evenings and converse in her apartments. The queen, instead of making herself agreeable and coaxing him, putting him at his ease and amusing him, always played the disdainful and silly jester, trying to seem as if she held the king under her yoke; also her talk was extremely dull, and she made no effort to make it, or allow it to be made, more suitable; all of which alienated the king after a time, and led him, first, to spend his evenings in his own apartments with men, and then with women like his cousin Mlle. de Charolais, and the Comtesse de Toulouse. The king is very shy, and his principal want is to find persons who put him at his ease; when he finds them we see, by his relations to the cardinal and to Mme. de Mailly, to what point he is a creature of habit. It thus happens that the king and queen have said very little to each other in the course of their lives, and that they have met only for the good of the State; which ought to have resulted in dull and sulky children; though the contrary has happened, for the dauphin is very pretty and clever, and so are Mesdames his sisters. To-day the queen is in a cruel position as regards Mme. de Mailly, whom she is forced to keep as lady of the palace. During the latter's weeks of service the queen's temper is dreadful, and her servants feel it. Certainly, it is doing her a great service to find a third person for after supper between the queen and the mistress. The queen knows that Mme. de Mailly is on the watch every week to find some new thing in her to ridicule and to laugh at with the king as soon as she has left her.

The cardinal wishing to persuade the king at Compiègne to renew relations with the queen in order to have more

children, the king replied that he was certain to have nothing but daughters, which was as good as saying, "My good man, hold your tongue!" The queen has had her bed turned at Fontainebleau so as to leave but one side to it, which people regard as an act of ostentatious divorce, of which she boasts out of season.

[October 15.] The Duc d'Orléans is at Fontainebleau, furious at all he sees. He comes from his retreat and burns with the desire to get back to it, finding indecency increased, the cardinal more tyrannical and more imbecile than ever, the king less decent though pretending to decency with his mistress; the court of the roi Petau—bedlam broke loose, he calls it; and the crown of all evils is that the king seems to care so little for his kingdom and for the affliction and unspeakable misery into which his people have fallen. Every day increases this misery by some new evil; the vineyards have just failed throughout the kingdom from a premature frost which has lasted for fifteen days. And with it all, no remedies proposed to save the suffering people, not even palliatives, nothing more than a few ship-loads of wheat bought at a great price in Holland. The cost of bread having increased two *liards* in the Paris markets on Wednesday last, they told the cardinal, to which he replied that "he could not understand it at all." A fine answer for the conductor of a State!

The Comte de Camas, envoy extraordinary of the new King of Prussia, is so fascinated by the cardinal that he is acting directly against the intentions of his master. He sings everywhere in a sickening manner the praises of this old minister, so odious to every one. He has even fallen into the folly of saying harm of Voltaire; he told the cardinal, who repeated it freely, that Voltaire was ill-received by the King of Prussia, whereas they write on all sides that

the poet-philosopher was welcomed and treated by the monarch better than the classics say the divine Plato was treated by Dionysius the Tyrant. This has made a good squabble for M. de Camas at his own Court.

[October 31.] The greatest event that could have happened for the consummation of centuries has taken place. The Emperor [Charles VI.] died suddenly on the 19th of this month. Indigestion, gout striking in, carried him off at a moment least expected. The news was at first concealed at Court; a great emotion was observed at Fontainebleau; the cardinal was very gloomy. The king seemed so likewise, but as the event is favourable to us, this sadness must be because his Majesty is embarrassed at continuing to employ the cardinal at this juncture: oh! *quantum impar labori!* How shall that feeble old head, uncertain, without principles, with its little Amelot, how can it disentangle itself from so many complicated interests? And how can we trust in any consecutive course followed by an old man of his age? Yet we need here a comprehensive and far-extending plan.

Here, suddenly, is the whole structure of the cardinal's system overthrown to its base; he relied, for the duration of the peace and the empire of France in foreign negotiations, on our intimate friendship with the Emperor; for that prince had need of us in the affairs of his succession; and now, here are the affairs of that succession in a state of total impossibility. As for the Grand-duke,¹ it would be madness to propose him to-day as the universal successor of the Emperor in the hereditary countries, and hence of the empire. Let us examine for a moment the event that has

¹ Francis of Lorraine, Grand-duke of Tuscany, husband of Maria-Theresa, daughter of the Emperor Charles VI. who became by her father's death Queen of Hungary and Bohemia and heiress of his Austrian possessions.—Tr.

just happened and see whether all the materials could be less ready:—

1. The Emperor leaving all his forces exhausted by his two unfortunate wars against the Turks.

2. His two nieces married to the two least powerful princes in Germany, who have pretensions to succeed him.

3. The maritime powers, jealous of France and Spain, combined at sea at the present moment to strike at England to leeward.

4. England furious at the ill-success that has followed her expenditures and at the wiliness of France, and also at the apparent treachery of her king and minister in having thrice refused the mediation of France and the neutrality of Naples, while France, having managed the re-establishment of her marine service, was secretly sending fleets to America, so that England now finds herself confronted with a French navy.

5. Holland not knowing what to say to our maritime actions and our connivance with Spain.

6. The King of Prussia, a young man of intellect, armed and prodigiously rich.

7. England, in recent alliance with Prussia and Russia, now increasing that alliance, with Denmark to increase her troops.

8. Bavaria, powerful in men and money, and the Elector, a wise, and high-minded prince, having the inside of the pavement at Vienna to the point of making himself feared and of stopping all ulterior execution of the "pragmatic."

9. The King of Sardinia, captain and soldier, having many troops and much money, ready to fling himself on the Milan provinces already ceded to him by our treaty of 1733.

10. Spain covetous of Italy; the Queen of Spain furious at what she calls her petticoat, Parma and Tuscany, being taken from her.

11. The King of Naples rather powerful at home, and ready to fling himself upon Italy.

12. The succession of the old Palatine disputed and litigated between the Prince de Sulzbach, the King of Prussia, and Saxony.

And finally (see the singularity of this), the sole universal heir of the Emperor, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, according to the "pragmatic" sole heir to all the hereditary states, is without a man, without a sou, without officers, without generals, and, what is worse, without reputation.

This is how our great cardinal thought things so prepared that the present event could happen without bringing on a war! Either he aimed for peace and has missed his mark, or he aimed for our grandeur by shuffling the cards, in which case he has mismanaged matters for France. We must agree that the character of his policy has been cleverness in obtaining little things, rather than broad views and what is called skill and genius.

[November 5.] All those who come from Fontainebleau say that our ministers do not know where they are; they have no plan, not the slightest; they are gloomy and worried by this blow — the death of the Emperor. They add that a movement toward M. Chauvelin is felt everywhere, and they think his return will not be long delayed, either under the nose of the cardinal (his Eminence enduring it and seeming to demand it) or by the quiet retirement of the said cardinal, who must admit himself *impar oneri*, by age and genius. Another pretext for quitting him: the cardinal has rested his whole policy on our alliance with the Emperor; that monarch dying suddenly, all is changed. It was well, they say, to remove M. Chauvelin when it was desirable to be reconciled to the Emperor and make him trust us; for that minister was regarded as his chief enemy; he had been sac-

rificed to the Emperor; but now, on the contrary, the point will be to have a perfect understanding with Spain; this requires M. Chauvelin, whom Spain believes to be in her best interests.

The Archduchess-grand-duchess [Maria Theresa] has begun by taking the title of Administratrix-general of the hereditary dominions. This fashion of letting the masculine fiefs of Germany fall to the distaff will certainly shock and revolt the world before long. They say the Elector of Bavaria is not as strong to-day as the Grand-duke. The King of Prussia takes counsel and sounds England and Holland. It is thought that the English incline towards him; in a word, that all Europe reunited will combine to make an emperor as strong as the last, to counterpoise the House of France. But, I ask, on whom will they agree? Will it be Bavaria, which is strong, or Prussia, which is rich and Protestant (but may be made Catholic)? Will it be the Grand-duke, for whom they would guarantee the "pragmatic"? I hold that such an agreement is impossible for humanity; too many views, too many interests, too much uncertainty in the forces of all to make the balance clear for any.

I say that we shall be accused of malice if we support the weakest — which is the Grand-duke, because he has only the precarious authority of opinion and general expectation, while the others have forces acquired and in possession.

Things seem, however, to be going for the Grand-duke. They have declared the Archduchess-grand-duchess Queen of Bohemia and Hungary and Administratrix-general of the hereditary countries. They affect to say that, the Grand-duke having asked M. de Zinzendorff what he should be, the latter answered, "The husband of the Archduchess."

And we, shall we let pass this great event of the death of the Emperor without gaining anything for ourselves or Spain?

All are about to league themselves against France. They will make use of the present moment of maritime war, when we have just managed to revive our navy and surreptitiously help Spain, they will, I say, make use of this to represent, as was done at the election of Charles VI. how urgent is the necessity of lowering the House of France, and, every one regarding that as a point of honour, the necessity of electing a *powerful* emperor becomes paramount. To this our imbecile ministry has led us, under a pretext of frankness and love for universal peace!

The king is pensive, and full of gloom, which increases hourly at the sight of such enormous misery within, and of all the dangers that threaten us without, at least with the total loss of his glory. He sees that the cardinal is the sole cause of this evil; that under him honest and able men are proscribed, and knaves advanced. But he himself is losing more and more in reputation. He sees his kingdom in danger, but instead of making a change he lets things go. One might almost say that he wilfully exhibits imbecility and folly, for at present he talks much of State affairs with his little friends, as an equal with equals, and this is much worse than when he did not talk at all. He repeats word for word what the cardinal prompts him. Here are a few of his foolish sayings: His chasseurs said to him in his carriage, "Sire, we are going to have war." The king answered, "Oh! when a great king does not choose to have war you will not have it!" "But," they said, "your Majesty guaranteed the Pragmatic sanction." To which the king replied: "We are several powers who have guaranteed that, and we shall get out of it as best we can." "But," they said again, "the Grand-duke cannot be elected emperor." "Faith!" exclaimed the king, "let it be anybody, provided it is not a Protestant, for as to that, I shall stand no nonsense."

[November 22.] The dauphin is charming, and his governor, M. de Châtillon, the silliest of mortals. Here is an instance. A few days ago M. de Châtillon went to Paris; the dauphin was to write to him; they gave him a table and paper, and M. de Muy, sub-governor, went to sleep. The dauphin took it into his head to write a great sheetful of news, and he imitated the writing of M. de Châtillon. The news was invented capitally; he gave a minute account of the death of the czarina, of events that he said were preparing at Court, of the Swedish alliance, and so forth. Then he went into the antechamber to show his letter to the two gentlemen of the Bedchamber who sit there. They thought the letter was really from M. de Châtillon, and they kept it as a great secret. On the governor's return they spoke of it; he frowned and said it was horrible that the dauphin should play the newsmonger and forge handwriting, and that such an offence was punishable by the laws. He went up to the king and laid the matter before him. The king did not know what to say. As for the cardinal, he took the thing in the right way; he told the dauphin that the editor of the "*Mer-cure Galant*" was going to give it up and he would procure the place for him. M. de Châtillon is, they say, an automaton which folly makes talk and pride makes walk.

The Duc de Richelieu gave a great supper last night at his little house beyond the barrière of Vaugirard. All is gallantry and obscenity in that establishment, especially the walls, which have, in the middle of each panel very im-modest figures in bas-relief. The beauty of this supper was to see the old Duchesse de Brancas trying to see these figures, putting on her spectacles and, with her lips pinched, considering them coldly while the Duc de Richelieu held a candle and explained them to her.

All is in combustion in the diocese of Sens. Eighty rec-

tors have denounced to the Church the catholicism of their archbishop, whom disinterested persons declare to be execrable. [Formerly Bishop of Soissons, and noted for his acts, orders, and writings in favour of the Constitution Unigenitus.] They say, these priests, that their archbishop is Manichean, and according him there are two Gods on earth. To these eighty rectors others are added daily, and no one knows what will come of it. They denounce, as I have said, him and his works to the Church as heretical, and they appeal to a future council. I doubt the latter. If these men are clever and well-advised they will not lay themselves open to attack from the side which the Court has undertaken to sustain. M. de Maurepas laughs at them maliciously; he is not sustained himself this long time, and he feels it; so that, under the circumstances, he is very foolish to mix himself up in such difficulties. This affair, and the other combustion that reigns in the diocese of Montpellier, through the efforts of the new bishop, are just what the persecuting and ambitious prelates desire, and what they called *felix culpa*. A quantity of them are arriving in Paris and gathering up their thunderbolts to stun the poor cardinal and represent to him that this is the effect of the pacific conduct he has tried to hold.

[December 18.] The cardinal made a sudden journey to Issy last week, which surprised every one; the king said openly that the cardinal had *many reflections* to make on the affairs of the time; and every one was taken in and thought that an innocent speech. Nevertheless, the Court is deserted; people feel there is nothing to be done there for their own interests, in view of the footing on which the king has allowed his authority, his personal consideration, and his affairs to be placed.

At the Council of Wednesday the 7th of this month, the

Duc d'Orléans issued at last from his retirement and was present. They talked over all affairs in general and especially the wheat question. The session lasted a long time, and shortly after the Duc d'Orléans went back to Sainte-Geneviève to remain till the Epiphany.

I do not wish to be praised, only *approved*: that is the food for my success; and if I lived steadily with men whose approbation I continually felt, I do not know how far I could go. Praise disconcerts me more than blame. I can intrench myself in some safe corner under blame, but praise — I do not know how to bear it. In a word, to do well, I want to ignore myself; I want not even to perceive that I am there, but to have the way lighted before me and to be told, "Go, go straight, go sure!"

[December 20.] The Duc d'Orléans has declared me his chancellor in place of my brother, who was thanked. The good understanding between my brother and myself has sufficiently rebuffed the calumny which tried to say that I contributed to his expulsion; on the contrary, he had prepared the way in my favour, and I should not have been chosen without him. I knew nothing of this choice except from him; he told it to me at Compiègne, as I have said above. When I thought that it was upon his ruins that I was to be established, I did not wish it. He told me that it was all his consolation, and another would have it if I refused it. I let myself be guided by him, and I have kept the secret faithfully.

At my first interview with his Royal Highness I saw he was an excellent man. Dissatisfied as he was with the cardinal, and justly so, he nevertheless told me it was to him that I should pay my first visit, and that I *must* go to see him. As he knew the cold terms on which I am with his Eminence, he told me one should never scowl at men in

such office, and that this was part of the respect one owes to the king.

I was received by the cardinal at first with an open face; then, when I had told him what brought me, he began to gesticulate and mutter between his teeth in a way I am accustomed to interpret, and which meant that what could not be prevented must be endured.

[December 27.] Whatever misfortunes happen, somebody says a bon-mot, a sharp thing, and nowadays a stupid one, and lo! the French nation laughs at it all! How amiable our dear nation is! The Seine overflows, Paris is inundated, the country submerged; on which they say that the river re-covers; that she has left her bed; that she is out of condition and is "on the pavement;" that she will soon have leaves because she is in Sève [sap] etc. This liking for platitudes, this playing on words, has increased immensely in the nation of late. A man named Du Parquet, attached to the suite of the Duc d'Orléans, excels in it, and seems to have set the fashion — which is a great honour. This play on words has taken the place to-day of the former songs on all events. During the youth of the late king it was called *turlupinades*, and a great deal is said about it in Molière and other satirists on the manners of the times.

[December 30.] Barjac [the cardinal's confidential *valet de chambre*] told one of his best friends yesterday, who had said he thought his Eminence much changed and in his dotage, that it was only too true, that he could not go on much longer, and it was greatly to be wished that he would retire soon; adding that his Eminence thought of doing so, but feared in that case that M. Chauvelin would return, and that he never lost sight of that for a moment, seeing the danger; but he had a sure means of preventing it, for which he worked; and that means was to make my brother con-

troller-general, which was not an easy thing to do. "But," said his friend, "the cardinal need only say the word and the thing is done; he is the master." "Oh, yes!" answered Barjac; "his Eminence has more influence than ever—nevertheless, this affair does not advance."

[January 2, 1741.] A confidant of the cardinal told me yesterday that one of the greatest vexations of his Eminence during his ministry was my appointment as chancellor to the Duc d'Orléans, a post of consideration and authority which has fallen to me visibly in spite of him,—to me, whom he had tried to ruin in credit and fortune; a post, too, belonging to my brother, his declared favourite.

The Duc d'Orléans tells me that the marriage of the Duc de Chartres to the Princess of Bavaria, second daughter of the Elector, is arranged, and when the Court returns from Saint-Germain to Versailles it will probably be announced. This affair comes very apropos for the welfare of Germany, and looks like a stroke of great ability. We shall thus be closely allied with Bavaria, which we ought to sustain in the election to the empire, and the parcelling out of the hereditary lands of Austria. On the other hand, the parties interested cannot blame us, because they will see that it is a suitable marriage for the son of the Duc d'Orléans, and one for which the king has done no more than give his consent.

The Duc d'Orléans thinks that after the cardinal's death it will be M. de Maurepas who will govern the kingdom. He says that the little secretaries of State, closely united, have carefully excluded all seigneurs from the Council, and will call in themselves, one after the other; that it is like a puppet-show dancing together, one getting up on the shoulders of another. He added that if the king proposed to put him at the head of affairs he would not accept; that it was

right only in the days when the king had good morals, but now he could not govern under the orders of a king whose amours were drawing down upon the kingdom the visible anger of God.

[January 7.] Never did I see the smallest provincial town so full of squabbles as the Palais Royal [residence of the Duc d'Orléans]. It is to-day, and in accordance with the politeness of the times, a den of backbiting, calumny, gossip, bad pictures, and detestable papers. Her Royal Highness [Françoise de Bourbon, daughter of Louis XIV. and Mme. de Montespan, widow of the Regent] is there like a dethroned queen. She has lost, after several years of widowhood, all authority over her son. She groans under this, she rages. The son is determined to preserve his independence; the mother is alert to recover her dominion. She has intelligence, and, above all, much woman's wit; every one ought to beware of her as to that; I can say with certainty that she adds insincerity to her practice; in spite of her pretended piety, she lies often to the Holy Spirit, and will give bad testimony against those whom she knows deserving of good. She encourages hatreds and unwarranted contempt; she herself is irreconcilable in her aversions and in all the passions that blacken her heart—witness her horrible rancour against her daughter, the Duchess of Modena.

We see, more than ever, two parties of the *noblesse* inhabiting the Palais-Royal; that of the son, that of the mother. They can be distinguished and pointed out by the finger; they rend one another, they do ill-turns to one another, and it is this august princess who keeps up these divisions with care, while the son employs silence only; but he has himself kept informed of everything, and conducts matters rather firmly, appointing no one in the household but those who are not his mother's people.

[January 13.] The king has suddenly taken to tapestry work. The fancy was so sudden that it was a masterpiece of courtiership to have gratified it. They had recourse to M. de Gesvres, whose chief occupation it is ; and the courier who went to Paris for what was needed, wools, needles, and frame, was only two hours and a quarter in going and coming. This will increase the favour of M. de Gesvres, and be a triumph to the cardinal's partisans.

[January 17.] The king and Mme. de Mailly have quarrelled like children. They are both taken with a fancy for tapestry ; Mme. de Mailly was so absorbed in that occupation that she did not answer the king when he spoke to her and questioned her. At last, the king, being impatient, threatened her, took a knife and cut her tapestry in four pieces : horrible quarrel, and wrangle ! Then it was necessary to make it up, and for that an extraordinary party took place, which is being much talked about. The king went to supper at Mme. de Mailly's, in her little room ; she borrowed a cook and gave a rather nice supper to her lover. There were only five or six guests.

[January 26.] M. de Belleisle said to a man in the legal profession who wants to make his fortune, " Monsieur, if you have great designs, make yourself a friend in M. d'Argenson." " No doubt," said the man, " M. d'Argenson the younger, the intendant of Paris." " No," said M. de Belleisle, " the elder ; manage to get his good-will." And he said to another man whom I know, and who is more in his confidence : " I have every reason to congratulate myself on M. d'Argenson's courtesy ; I am a friend to him ; but I have orders not to be so too openly." His friend said, " But with all his good reputation, the king does nothing for him ; all he has obtained comes from the Duc d'Orléans, and the king had no part in it." M. de Belleisle answered : " He will be compensated ;

for the last two years the office of controller-general has been destined for him, and to such a point that M. Orry is only kept on for his sake as long as the cardinal lives." M. de Belleisle is appointed ambassador to Francfort, and takes his real instructions from Bachelier, who is directing with the king the affairs in Germany on secret instructions from M. Chauvelin at Bourges.

[February 14.] I have always conducted myself with as much wisdom as I could, especially in the principal operations of my own fortunes; and yet it has happened that nearly everything that I have done has stood in need of apology; for instance:—

When I married I had a long argument to sustain with my then mistress on the motives of my marriage.

When I separated from my wife I had to have defenders before the world.

When I went to my intendancies everybody asked why I did so, inasmuch as I was already Councillor of State.

When I returned I had to state that I was the senior of the Council; that I had spent much money at Valenciennes, and saw no prospect of getting Lille.

When I was appointed ambassador to Portugal another explanation as to why I took it.

When it was announced that I was not to go, great explanations against Cardinal de Fleury, who thwarted me from ill temper.

And finally, when I came to have the place of Chancellor to the Duc d'Orléans, then I required the patience of an angel to bear the air that my brother gave to it before the world, though it was he who proposed it to me, advised me to take it, and led me as it were by the hand.

[March 12.] To-night I saw the cardinal come out of the king's room with the air of a young fool, a giddy-brained

youth, hair in disorder blowing about, and laughing at the company; but he is shrinking day by day; from his good height of five feet seven he has shrunk to five feet three; moreover he crooks his legs like a foundered horse, he is knock-kneed, his toes turn out, and he quavers when he walks; he trots; he seemed to slip as he came through the crowd, giving bits of wisdom and applauding himself for everything. It is amazing how he keeps at work after his fashion — that is to say, passing his time without deciding anything, or undertaking anything that has a plan or fixed principles.

The Duc d'Orléans has been talking to me of his design to make himself a priest. "As for monk," he said, "I shall never be that." I opposed so fantastic a plan with the strongest reasons, of which I have just made a special memorial for the occasion. I told him the cardinal might subscribe to it out of malignity, but never the king; I maintained to him that the king had a soul and thought for himself. To all of which his Royal Highness answered: "I do not say when it will be, but it must be, sooner or later."

He says of me: "My chancellor is vehement, too hot; he wants to drive every one out of my house, for he finds them all unfaithful or not zealous. Not that I do not think as he does, or that I do not come round to his opinion, but I get to it by milder, slower ways than his; as for example, with Vernier my attorney; I led that affair to a good end, but by slower methods than his." — The prince thought he put great prudence into that Vernier affair, but I flatter myself that I alone conducted it by my advice and actions. He found the affair settled when he at least expected it.

[May 11.] There is every assurance that the agreement between the Court of Vienna and the King of Prussia is absolutely settled; that the conditions are miserable; that they only cede to him two duchies in Silesia, with promise

of deciding in his favour his right to make the claim to the contested succession of Berg and Juliers. These are small matters to result from so much success, measures so well taken, such large provision of men and money, while his enemy had nothing of all that and was in dire poverty. The House of Austria has reason to say that Providence protects it. When she is most threatened with a fall, suddenly some reversal takes place which puts her higher than ever ; such, for instance, as the peace we granted her in 1735, by which we made her more powerful in Italy than she ever expected to be. This agreement between Austria and Prussia (let us not hide it from ourselves) will be shortly followed by an attack of the league against the House of France, which will drive Don Carlos from Naples and Sicily, at slight cost. Behold the advent of a new House of Austria, more powerful than the last, which will have shown in this matter what her strength is and what ties bind her to the rest of Europe. The courier who was to bring the treaty between Prussia and Austria has not arrived. I shall have more certain news Friday ; meantime I know the above from the Prussian ambassador, M. Chambrier.

The Grand-duke will be elected emperor in consequence of this affair. Instead of that, had we accepted the treaty we could have elected the Bavarian emperor. Our proposed league was of six powers : France, Spain, Naples, Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony. In it the King of Prussia stipulated that Spain should not again attack Italy, but Spain could have made a private treaty with Sardinia to do so.

The cardinal stayed all yesterday at Versailles and did not go to Marly, where he was expected. He said he had too much work to do ; he has a passion for dictating little epistles to his secretaries, by means of which he fancies he does everything. He drivels as much in operations

of the mind as in those of the sentiments; his hatred is aroused at times and then sinks down again. It has been reported to me that the other day he was in very bad humour and some one was with him who thinks well of me and said so, pretending to be ignorant of his unjust animosity; on which he suddenly began a tirade against me personally, in which he did not forget my invasion in my brother's stead into the house of Orléans; winding up thus: "In short, to say the whole thing, he is a fit friend for Voltaire, and Voltaire is a fit friend for him." A person who wanted just then to come in and talk with the cardinal on public matters was advised by Barjac to put it off till another time, as his Eminence was in great wrath and excitement.

[May 16.] I cannot devote myself to any purpose without at the end of a very short time my heart entering into the matter, either for or against, be it for public matters or for men; I attach myself to it with delight or I become indignant. Perhaps this is a defect; I recognize it as such on occasions when the first impulse of anger overcomes my coolness; but as for the affection, usually that gives me joy and success in what I do; also it pleases those who serve with me, attaches them closer to me, and especially to their work.

VIII.

1741.

[MAY 20.] The weather is beautiful for the last few days, after a drought with frosts which they feared had killed everything; at last it rained, and we have had heavy dews, so that the country is revived and also our magnificent hopes; consequently, Sainte Geneviève has great credit; the oracles of ancient times did no better; the wind changed two days ago and came round to the southeast, and the shrine was immediately uncovered; never was any success more felt; people cry miracle; and they are right, for we enjoy the effect and what matters the cause?

Certainly, the providence of God, which I seriously watch and in which I have a material faith, sways the happiness of men according to their deserts, and awards them pains and recompense in this world; it touches them in the future by the treatment given to their race. We Frenchmen do not deserve to be grievously punished and crushed down; we are a chosen people who cultivate reason and the progress of true philosophy; we are gentle and beneficent, without rancour and merciful; but we are foolish, light-minded, and lazy; we believe what anybody says, and trivial theories are hard to overcome in us. We need that Providence should diminish our powers in order to lower our pride and our jeering frivolity; that is what has been happening to us through the scourges of the past year.

We are going now to make war against the Pragmatic sanction which we guaranteed, and this is why: Every one

cried out on the death of the Emperor that now this colossus of Austrian grandeur must be broken ; very good, if it is for the advancement of the happiness of the world to take from Germany a restless, tyrannical power which undermines all to arrogate everything to itself ; which fomenta restlessness in others (such as the aggrandizement of Russia and the change of government in Poland) only to profit by it. But let us not deceive ourselves ; when we have succeeded in this object of destroying the imperial grandeur of Austria, all we shall have done will be to procure happiness and equality for Germany, and our House of France will not be the greater for that ; for then these well-governed peoples, each in its own right, great Germanic powers, developing still farther from this very affair, such as Saxony, Prussia, and Bavaria, will become far more insurmountable barriers to our ambition than the Emperors of Austria have ever been.

But our designs are much more culpable ; I do not know what may happen as concerns Italy ; the best for us would be to let Spain and Naples do as they please and meddle little, or not at all, even for worthy purposes. We ought to favour the King of Sardinia, and work for his aggrandizement ; also for that of the republics of Venice, Genoa, and the Duke of Modena, etc.

But the great argument made in France is that if the Grand-duke becomes emperor, with all the forces pledged to him by the Pragmatic sanction, he will attack us and overwhelm us on the morrow. This is how for some time past our French ambition hides itself beneath precaution ; our leaders have imposed upon a silly people. No, we have nothing to fear, especially since we are leagued with Spain ; nor had we even before that ; all Europe would make with us what is called "the prayer of the good soldier ;" to whatever degree

of power the new House of Austria attains, or could attain, it will never go to the point of demanding of us Alsace and the Metz territory. We can always force justice to be done us; above all if we take the tone that we can do so, and if we are always ready to arm to obtain that justice; but not by setting up unjust pretensions, as did Louis XIV. after the peace of Nimeguen. And finally let us calculate what a new war of ambition would cause us in domestic disasters, and we shall find that never could the Emperor do as much harm as this war, if we go into it, will do.

[June 10.] I proposed yesterday to the Duc d'Orléans to engrave a medal with his portrait for the Academy of Ville-Franche; he granted the permission unwillingly, and gave me his reasons with touching modesty; he said: "Ah! what am I for such a thing? I do nothing, I have done nothing; it might be well for my son if he ever commands armies and wins battles."

He was lately talking with me about a quantity of events in the life of his father, the Regent of France, and of his character. He described him as very indiscreet, speaking of everything imprudently; adding, however, that about certain important matters about which he had resolved not to speak he kept silence absolutely. He gave me as an example of this the marriage proposed for himself to the infanta in case the king died; by which he ran the risk of having no posterity, and therefore did not let him marry her. The Duc d'Orléans heard this secret from another source; the Regent only admitted it when he spoke of it to him. By this policy the Regent ran the risk I mention, but he would have balked Spain in case the king died, for the House of Orléans would then have taken possession of the throne of France and the infanta would become queen, which would have calmed the anger of the Queen of Spain.

The Duc d'Orléans is giving himself up daily more and more to his taste for monastic devotion; he spends his days at Sainte-Geneviève; there he falls into the smallest practices of devotion; he hears the children their catechism with the priests of Saint-Etienne; he walks in the most insignificant processions, he works continually at his criticism of Holy Scripture. His sister, Mme. de Chelles, has the monkish character, — all the shuffling trickery and petty intrigue of cloisters. The Duchesse d'Orléans, their mother, is entirely given over to the rights of the bastards, and so to the Noailles.

A man belonging to the Court was depicting the other day to a provincial the condition of our Court. "You must remember," he said, "that there are precisely two parties at Court, that of the Noailles, and that of the Chauvelin. The first aims to have Cardinal de Tencin succeed Cardinal de Fleury; it is composed of the Comtesse de Toulouse and her family the Noailles, the Unigenitus bishops, the bastards, and the devout people. The other party is the favourite; it has ways and means that are more solid and more sure. This party has the largest share in the principal deliberations of the Council; it has the mistresses and the favourites, though Mme. de Mailly frequents the Noailles, Mademoiselle, and the Comtesse de Toulouse; in that she follows the commands of her lover, who plays this comedy."

The Duc d'Orléans has a great air of belonging to the party of the Noailles, and this displeases the king greatly, though he sees them himself continually, out of policy. All his heart, his esteem, and his feelings are for Bachelier, M. Chauvelin, and his secret party. Thus his Majesty imagines that the Duc d'Orléans wishes to be to him a new and importunate organ of the Noailles and the other hypocrites who are seeking to put Cardinal de Tencin into the ministry; and

so thinking, he treats him coldly and refuses what he considers a new career of dissimulation. He also thinks that the duke desires to preach to him about his mistress. The Duc d'Orléans, in telling me this, said, "The good lad," meaning the king; he never speaks of him in any other way.

The king had passed his word to Mme. de Mailly and other ladies of his society to give the place of first gentleman of the Bedchamber, *in custodi nos*, to M. de Luxembourg, until the little de La Trémouille was old enough to fill it.

The cardinal asked for the place with eagerness, and even with intolerable arrogance; his Eminence thought this a party thrust, after losing as he has done the post of commander of the regiment of the guards. He told the king there was nothing for him but to retire as soon as it became known in the world that his Majesty disposed without him, and in spite of him, of the great offices of the Court. The king stayed till three in the morning with Mme. de Mailly, behaving like a madman; at last, at three o'clock, Mme. de Mailly said to him: "Sire, you are in too violent a state; well! we will give you back your word; do what you like for your cardinal." And on that the king, before going to bed, wrote a letter to the cardinal, which he gave in the morning to the Duc de Fleury, before all present at his *lever*, declaring that he gave him the office.

[June 24.] The evil of the thirst for gold is that it depopulates the world and plunges into slothfulness those who remain; it is a chimera to have all without doing anything for it, and above all to satiate passions easily. The discovery of the Indies realized that chimera. Philip II., King of Spain, thought himself god of the thunderbolts; heaven punished him by the failure of his scheme, by the depopulating and real enfeeblement of his monarchy. The same

fate spreads necessarily over all the nations which seek to share in the commerce of the West Indies. Look at the situation of Portugal, which obtains so pure a gold from her mines of Saint-Paul. What combats those Indies have caused since the beginning of the century, and about to be renewed to-day. No, that is not commerce, and I have said so a hundred times. We see the interests of commerce solely through the suborned eyes of some rich men who want to be richer. Let us forget the Indies, let us forget that miserable gold, let us regard it as we do expired notes of merchandise and useful products; we shall still have enough for our exchanges; let us not seek to have something for nothing, or for very little: God forbid it! Yet in this is placed nowadays the whole essence of commerce; the Dutch have been seen to make these great profits; French impatience has hitherto put up with it; but this will not last long. The ordinary profits of commerce are step by step, gradual; and it is to these that the peoples should be led. And yet this wealth is what makes Spain so considered; without the *beaux yeux de sa cassette* she would be looked upon as a very inferior power to France, which she could neither harm nor serve. This is what I was saying the other day about the present war to a man who can do much in the deliberations thereon.

The Duc d'Orléans was at first governed by his mother; little by little, he recognized the sort of a woman she is: haughty, ambitious, unreasonable, preferring herself in all things, putting her rights always above those of the House of Orléans, lowering those of her son to elevate her own. For instance, she thought only of keeping down the rights of her daughter-in-law, as long as the latter lived, of putting a great difference between the prerogatives of the first princess of the blood and those of the Daughters of France.

The Regent could never live with her, no matter how much he sometimes desired to do so. No two persons were ever more like each other than this princess and Marie de Medici; thus the same misfortunes would have attended her on the throne had she reigned; and in her sphere, she now finds herself deprived of all authority in the House of Orléans; what remained to her being lost daily. She has intelligence and tastes; she loves order, but with expense and no economy; her passions are revenge and secret anger; she is unjust and obstinate; she does good solely to exhibit her power; no one sees more clearly than she in a conversation; she speaks only from a design, every syllable has an object; she unravels and reads into others; all these gifts are merely feminine cleverness, and their superiority leads only to ill-success when passions contrary to society are in her soul; thus divine Providence has willed it. She derives her nature from that of her mother, Mme. de Montespan, to which she adds a certain spirit of order, and perversities of injustice and hardness, characteristic of Louis XIV. Do we not always see in bastards a misplaced pride? They carry the prerogatives of their rank farther than that rank allows, no matter how high parental affection may have placed it. In this they are like financiers and parvenus who, full of their new rank, are always fearing lest it should not be properly recognized; whereas the old nobles are so accustomed to their rank, and even so bored by it, that they let it drop.

The Duc d'Orléans pays respect to his mother from religion and natural piety; but he does not allow one particle of his authority in his house to pass into her hands. It was a masterly stroke to dispossess my brother and install me, although it was the result of my brother's own action. As for me, since I have held the office her Royal Highness's

authority is still further diminished, as she honours me with no orders, although she does not openly oppose me; it is pitiable, all that.

Her son is very susceptible of the small vices contrary to society; his birth and a certain foundation of nobleness and pride which he takes from the Bourbons alienates him from social life; his birth through his mother and even the pettiness of mind which his piety induces give him those vices. Religion is never hypocrisy in princes, but it is always pettiness. He is privately very jealous of his son; anything that would show particular attachment to the Duc de Chartres would displease him, especially in an officer who ought to be wholly his own. My brother lost ground with him because he was too much with his mother.

[July 3.] The cardinal has taken up a veritable affection for M. Bachelier, or rather, has seemed to do so. As no one in the world hates the Noailles more than the latter their mutual hatred has united them; for the cardinal is ending his days in hatred of the Noailles, ever since they made the Comte de Gramont colonel of the Guards in spite of him. His Eminence cannot recover from that blow; he thinks the perfidy of that party and its triumph over him too notorious. He opens his heart about it continually to Bachelier; he weeps, he tells him he is betrayed on all sides. So here are the anti-Chauvelinists furious; they are trying to detach M. Bachelier from M. Chauvelin; no doubt the cardinal has taken that idea into his head, and perhaps this is all a trick on the part of the old monkey.

[July 5.] War is declared; we send 25,000 infantry into Bavaria, by means of whom the Elector will at last declare an irruption into Bohemia, Upper Austria, Tyrol, etc. The officers are appointed; the MM. Paris have the provisioning, but no one yet knows where our magazines are to be stationed.

What will our proclamations say now, after our guarantee of the Pragmatic and our great fraternizing with the House of Austria? What clumsiness in the government to have bound itself only to have to unbind itself nimbly!

[July 15.] I see very few persons who have fixed principles as to what produces events; they see just before them only, like horses who have two bits of leather beside their eyes; at each event they change convictions; or rather they have none, they let themselves go to popular talk, which judges of these causes as we judge of that of the wind. One of my friends who has intelligence, and a quantity of other men who pass for great connoisseurs of intrigues at Court (without mixing in them themselves) weary me with their constant variations about MM. Chauvelin, Bachelier, Belleisle, and Breteuil; the shares of those gentlemen rise and fall according as it pleases the forgers of news and the friends of the parties, who support the rumours as they please. Here is the news of to-day, and many persons of intelligence believe it. They say that M. Bachelier is disgusted with M. Chauvelin, that he abandons M. de Breteuil, that M. de Belleisle is becoming master of everything, that M. de Breteuil fears him, that he has insulted the cardinal by putting on cavalier airs with him, etc.

It is certain that the cardinal himself is not wholly in the secret of affairs. He tells his friends that there will be no war; he is deceived and misled in the very orders he gives; he complains of M. Amelot because he gave him orders quite the contrary of those that were executed. He is convinced that the army which is going into Germany goes merely to support the election of the Elector of Bavaria to the dignity of Emperor, whereas it is really going for the invasion that Bavaria is about to make into the Austrian States. The King of Prussia has said everywhere that he should not trust

France in anything so long as she is governed by the cardinal.

Every day the cardinal is foiled in other matters than public affairs. Here is Mme. de Vintimille clever enough to obsess the king, while her sister Mailly was only a goose. The cardinal is resolved to drive away Mme. de Vintimille, but he does not succeed; she attacks in front, and prevents the cardinal from seeing the king for more than one quarter of an hour a week; for that reason she keeps him at Choisy and he is never at Versailles for a whole day. His Eminence expects to get his revenge at Compiègne, where he will keep the king three months and push her off—but he will not succeed.

[July 27.] It is thought that the king may go to the war in Flanders; very grand equipages are being prepared which can only be for the king. They say that the other day, at Choisy, he said to his head-cook: "Pajot, are you brave? Will you go to the war?" and the cook replied that he feared nothing for himself, but only for his Majesty, and he would make him just as good ragouts with the army as at Choisy.

[July 29.] The king abruptly declared yesterday after supper at Choisy that he would not go to Compiègne, and all orders have been countermanded, a resolution which covers mysteries and irresolution. It is supposed to be Mmes. de Vintimille and de Mailly who are determined to have this triumph and keep the king tranquil at Choisy and sheltered from the cardinal. This will come hard on a quantity of persons who had made great provisioning for the sojourn at Compiègne, the king having promised to stay there three months this year.

[July 30.] The declaration of war against England will soon appear and the attack will be made at the same time. The Bailli de Givry has received this news, and is ordered to

arrange everything for the re-establishment of the port of Dunkerque, and to permit privateers to fall upon the English in the Channel. Our squadron consists of thirteen large vessels; we shall join at Cadiz that of Spain, which has twelve; total, twenty-five. That of England has thirteen under Haddock, and fifteen under Norris; total, twenty-eight. It has always been said as a true maxim that two French vessels were certain of beating three English vessels; but here we are mixed with the Spaniards whose navy has never yet been tried against that of England. The latter is, it is true, badly equipped in sailors and marines, but their guns are better than ours.

At any rate, we shall let loose on England our privateers, now at Dunkerque and Saint-Malo, which will harass these insularies; and if the Hanoverian army marches to the help of the Queen of Hungary, ours, with the Prussian camp at Magdeburg, has orders to intercept it and attack it. Thus we take the English on all sides and march to the total destruction of England and her influence.

M. Vanhoe, the ambassador from Holland, assures us of the neutrality of his country; but though I believe it will last some time, until the attack and first checks of the English, I cannot doubt that the Dutch nation will soon come to the help of the others and that the greater number of votes will insist upon it, both from jealousy and for safety.

[August 4.] I have had information conveyed (not wishing to appear in it myself) to the Duc d'Orléans that these cursed priests are deceiving him and will make him fall into a vulgar trap. They have let loose upon him the Abbé Couturier, general of the Oratoire, and other Sulpicians; they have told him that a pious, religious prince, learned in theology like him, owed a statement to the public of his doctrine on the questions of the times; that he was suspected of Jan-

senism because he stayed at Sainte-Geneviève; that his sister, Mme. de Chelles, was a declared Jansenist; that he had long confessed to the rector of Saint-Paul. In short, all this has filled his head with the Unigenitus and made him zealous for the bull—that is to say, for the dogma only; but one soon passes from dogma to a taste for persecution through zeal. They have taken him on the side of his vanity, and have urged him to compose a great work on first propositions; he is half way through it, and is correcting it with the Abbé de Hauteville, former secretary of Cardinal Dubois; they propose to have it printed, and tell him it is very fine. These men are furious at seeing how well the prince stands with the people. This work is a ruse of Cardinal de Fleury, who is only seeking to get a prince of the blood decried. It is the same manoeuvre by which he ruined Cardinal de Noailles, his benefactor.

The Duc d'Orléans has at least gathered this return for his retirement and his generous charity: he is beloved by all the lower classes in Paris and the provinces. But if he declares himself an extravagant bullist, he will have upon his shoulders four-fifths of Paris, who are in the ranks of Jansenism. Such was the case with the Archbishop of Cambrai, Fénelon, who was loved and pitied by all the world in his exile, which was solely caused by his opposing the declaration of the king's marriage to Mme. de Maintenon, and by his noble submission to the condemnation of his so-called quietism. Weary of his exile, persuaded that the condemnation of Quesnel was just, he wrote with zeal in favour of Molinism, and from that moment he was dishonoured before the public, he had friends no longer, he was despised as a miserable slave to Rome, seeking to hook himself once more to the Court in that way.

All this I have had represented to the Duc d'Orléans by

an ecclesiastic in whom he has confidence, and to whose vivid and zealous remonstrance he listened, promising to reflect upon it; and already he is slackening his work. I expect to appear myself upon the scene before long.

[August 11.] Great event at Court; Mme. de Vintimille was taken ill at Choisy, with fever only. The king came to pass two days at Versailles and received four couriers a day from the sister of his mistress. He returned to Choisy on Thursday, and remained there three days, in spite of a promise he had made to the cardinal.

[August 13.] Mme. de Vintimille is dying at Choisy; the king does not leave, even for an instant, her sister, Mme. de Mailly, who is in despair at losing so good a sister. According to other people, Mme. de Vintimille is one of the wickedest women ever known. No one can tell to what this intimacy would have led in the government after the death of the cardinal; it was the great resource of the Noailles tribe. That party is the more dangerous because it furnishes all sorts and species of people. Do you want libertines, male and female? atheists? devotees? they are all there in that batch, especially persons of wit and imagination — the party swarms with them. Mme. de Vintimille has marked influence; she is the mind of her sister Mailly as the latter is the sister's body, performing the functions of favourite to the Very Christian king.

[August 18.] There are times when the greatest calm reigns within and without a kingdom; I have frequently observed that this lull foretells events of the utmost consequence to humanity (though in themselves they are no great things). Nothing is being talked of now, nor for some weeks, neither foreign affairs nor those of the kingdom. Yet it is certain that everything is preparing for our armies to enter Germany and declare war against England. The

king has been flattered with the idea of enterprises that will make his reign glorious; at present he is at Choisy where women and favours detain him, not allowing him to go to the cardinal for more than a few half-hours a week. Mme. de Vintimille is still hanging between life and death; at any rate her health is made the pretext for the king's stay at Choisy, in spite of the efforts of the cardinal to keep him at Versailles. He pays all attentions (and more) to Mme. de Vintimille, as though she were his declared mistress. She has acquired, they say, an ascendancy over his mind and inspires jealousy in her sister; people think there is an antipathy between them. I think the king too mild and with too little inclination for libertinism to fall into an infidelity of this kind, and pass from one sister to the other, and one with so few attractions. But if their bodies are exempt from jealousy, their minds may justly be jealous, for the superiority of Mme. de Vintimille, such as they describe it, must eclipse the poor Mailly, who is nothing but a kind woman with a tender heart and common mind. Mme. de Vintimille's fortune is the king's own work, and this, no doubt, is one of her attractions for him. What ought to repel him is a reputation for malignity, which goes on increasing when indulged; from malignity of language people pass to that of the mind, thence to that of the heart. A king should love kind persons only.

[August 28.] At last the king has returned to Versailles for a long stay, — Mme. de Vintimille being brought on a litter. The king gave her at Choisy every mark of the greatest affection; she enraged the Faculty by not taking the remedies they ordered; the king went on his knees beside her bed to implore her to recover. It was Bachelier who made the king return from Choisy and bring back Mmes. de Mailly and de Vintimille after him. They did

not expect it. The king had begun by telling the said Bachelier that they were to stay another month, but the latter proved to him by sound argument and persuasion that a speedy return was necessary. I know that Bachelier is with him more than ever, in the same intimate confidence. He says that the cardinal is beginning to take other views of M. Chauvelin, to admire his wise conduct during his exile, and to say it was his greatest enemies who caused his dismissal. What is chiefly bringing the cardinal to forgive M. Chauvelin and his friends is the passion of resentment and contempt into which he has fallen against the whole Noailles party, since it tricked him in the matter of the Comte de Gramont. Having his eyes opened as to all concerning them, he discovers daily fresh dangers for himself and the State.

[September 4.] Last evening the king, returning from vespers with some twenty-five persons about him, allowed himself to repeat all that the cardinal had told him the night before about public affairs; he talked much and at random, to the great scandal of those who care for him and desire that he should put into his conversation more reflection and less chatter. He said that the naval fight of M. de Caylus against four English vessels had gone off very well on our side, for the English were not brave at sea, the Dutch were much more so. He said also that the King of Prussia and the Comte de Neuperg were face to face; that the King of Prussia ought to have waited for us, but he chose to go briskly into that affair alone, because people talked ill of his boldness, or rather his valour, at the battle of Molwitz. In such talk there is indecent insult to our enemies, indiscretion as to our secret opinions, and slander on our best friend.

[September 5.] Mme. de Vintimille, the beloved sister of

the favourite sultana, has at last given birth to a son with success, much as they feared for her health. The king goes to see her four or five times a day. They have lodged her in the apartment of Cardinal de Rohan, which covers that chaplain of France with ridicule.

There is no longer any doubt of our treaty with Prussia and Bavaria to despoil at our mutual cost the Queen of Hungary, and also to clothe the Elector of Bavaria with the imperial dignity; though it is to be wished that kings only should rule in Germany. This last promise, made no doubt to the Elector of Bavaria, may be annulled by obstacles brought forward by the King of Prussia, who, finding that he cannot be emperor himself, and that Bavaria increases in possessions, may oppose that House, already so powerful, in becoming stronger still through the imperial dignity. I may add to this that the Queen of Hungary herself, becoming aware that her husband, the Grand-duke of Tuscany, cannot be elected emperor, would be charmed that no other should be so; and thus would be abolished that inconvenient dignity perpetuated since Charlemagne, the rights of which have tyrannized equally over Germany and Italy, which obscures the grandeur of our monarchy, though it issued from us and was invented to decorate the empire of the lilies.¹

[September 10.] Mme. de Vintimille died yesterday at seven in the morning, after being safely delivered of a son a week earlier. She was seized with what is called in

¹ The Grand-duke of Tuscany, Francis, Duke of Lorraine, husband of Maria Theresa, was elected emperor of the "Holy Roman and Germanic Empire" so called, as Francis I. in 1745. Their two sons, Joseph II. and Leopold II., succeeded them; and Francis II., son of Leopold II., after being elected to the Empire in 1792, resigned the title (bringing that empire to an end) and took that of Francis I., Emperor of Austria, in 1804-1806. — TR.

Piedmont a miliary fever, which is common, and the Queen of Sardinia died of it two months ago. This malady is little known in France; the name comes from the innumerable little spots like grains of millet that come out upon the skin; it is apt to seize women in their confinements rather than others.

There is no doubt now about a journey to Fontainebleau. Judging the affliction of the king by the care he took upon himself during Mme. de Vintimille's illness, he must be inconsolable. They attribute this extraordinary care to love, and a condemnable infidelity to the sister. But how malicious the world is! His Majesty's friendship for the deceased called forth those cares; for my part, I believe they came from his love for his mistress, Mme. de Mailly; for the pair were the most united sisters ever seen, and the king felt what would be the grief and anguish of his mistress if she lost her mate. To any one knowing the personages, what likelihood is there that the two sisters would have remained united had there been the least suspicion of the robbery of a heart so illustrious and precious? Mme. de Vintimille was under great obligations to her sister; she was ugly, even repulsive; she had had already two or three known lovers. Our master is so faithful to friendship, so much a man of habit, etc., that if we reflect we shall not believe this thing — but people want to believe whatever is bad.

Her pregnancy and the birth of her son were scandalous; as soon as the birth took place and there was a question of baptizing the child, the rector of Versailles notified the king that there was opposition, or rather protestation, on the part of M. de Vintimille, who had signified it to the said rector, declaring that, having been informed that his wife was pregnant, he disavowed all presentation of the

child for baptism as his son. But the king chose that the child should be baptized as the son of M. de Vintimille, and it was so done by his express order. The Archbishop of Paris and the Marquis du Luc, uncle and father of M. de Vintimille came, as good politicians, to see the mother and acknowledge the child. M. de Vintimille, however, had said before the birth : " I do not know who the father of that child is ; it is certainly not I ; it is either the king, or the Duc d'Ayen, or Forcalquier, or my lacquey Saint-Jean."

Mme. de Mailly was given as mistress to the king by the clever politicians who meddled in his affairs solely because she is a woman of no consequence, kind in temper, and not interfering. Her sister went too far ; it was she who allied her with Mademoiselle, with the Maréchale d'Estrées, and finally with the Comtesse de Toulouse ; which gave so much trouble to the secret council of the king. She had a strong mind, hard and extensive ; she was violent and daring ; and though she kept to her engagements for M. Chauvelin's party, she gave that party much trouble and followed its instructions very badly ; she openly declared against the cardinal and attacked him face to face. Every one will therefore rejoice at this death, but the party of M. Chauvelin and Bachelier have the most to be thankful for. The Noailles party loses everything, for the Duc d'Ayen founded his influence upon her, while the Comtesse de Toulouse by the same means had obtained the confidence of the king.

The Duc d'Orléans is becoming daily more and more misanthropic ; and the vexations he has to bear increase that disposition. He wants to retire and live on his pension as prince of the blood, and he says he shall still have enough left for charity.

[September 11.] The king was in a frightful state of affliction at the death of Mme. de Vintimille; he sobbed, he choked; the cardinal dared not speak to him, though finally he preached to him on human frailty,—which was very ill-received. At last, not being able to bear it any longer, his Majesty started at eleven o'clock night before last, with Mme. de Mailly, the Duc d'Ayen, and the Duc de Villeroy, and went to sleep at Saint-Leger, near Rambouillet. Such friendship, they say, is too like love; yet Mme. de Mailly takes it in good part; her grief is more silent. It is not known when the king will return to Versailles.

Financiers interested in many *sous-fermes* [system of leases and loans upon landed property under the old monarchy] have explained to me the unheard-of condition, getting daily worse and worse, of the commerce of money and credit. Instead of the confidence necessary for loans, a distrust reigns the equal of which was never yet seen in France. The most opulent, the richest, those who have the best reputation for punctuality can scarcely find 2000 *livres* to be borrowed in the market; people will not renew the notes of financiers, every one wants payment when they mature. Before the end of the month there will be a dozen more bankruptcies; the companies of the farmers-general will fail together, having made notes in common. The farmers-general have hitherto sustained those who could not meet their notes when due; but the companies themselves will now fail as well as individuals. And yet, at the key to which things have gone up, the royal treasury can be sustained by credit only; the expenditures of the king cannot be met by the actual revenue; as is done with those of the Duc d'Orléans, for which I employ only that which is actually in hand, without advances or credit. Here is the *dixième* [tithe] just im-

posed as was done in 1733. When it was then levied the receivers-general advanced the first quarter for war expenses; now it is imposed for October 1, and they cannot count on any actual receipt for more than nine months from now, and even then with the frightful exactions the Declaration announces; the preamble of which is singular: it states as the cause of the imposition of this tax the misery into which the kingdom has fallen, and the necessity under which the king is, to relieve that misery. So, then, this misery, which is not yet over, is the cause of a new tax which increases it! What logic! Meantime the payments into the royal treasury will come in worse and worse, and the *rentes* on the city will be retarded.

The king ordered on the morning after the death of Mme. de Vintimille that her face should be moulded (ugly as it was) in wax. As she had died in a convulsion her mouth was open and the chin pendent, and it required two strong persons to hold it in position to make the cast. Whatever may be said, I cannot see anything in all this but a share taken by the king in the affliction of his mistress at the death of a sister whom she loved. In this cursed century they turn all virtues to vices, and vices to virtues; the good feeling and good heart of the king have won him a detestable reputation as to this, which he does not deserve; this last act I have just mentioned bears the mark of a woman's grief. Mme. de Mailly believes it would comfort her to have the image of her sister before her; the king is impressed by this, and not by an unworthy love; it is the sign of a feeling heart; the king has the best heart in the world. He and Mme. de Mailly have shut themselves up at Saint-Leger to weep together; only four or five persons are admitted; though his Majesty hunted yesterday with the little pack of Prince Charles of Lorraine.

The day of Mme. de Vintimille's death when the king was so plunged in sorrow, he stayed in his bed till four o'clock; the cardinal entered, but was there only a moment, as the king could not speak to him; he choked and sobbed; the queen wished to enter, but they refused her at the door. At last the king rose and went to the rooms of the Comtesse de Toulouse, whence he started at five o'clock, without guards or torches, to go to Saint-Leger.

[October 10.] We continue on all sides to make war against England without declaring it. Our troops of the army of the Meuse are on the way from Dusseldorf to Münster and from Münster to Hanover; we shall enter the States of that ridiculous king and get our subsistence from them, as we shall also do in Bohemia; presently our privateers will descend on the English in the Channel, and compel that maritime power and Holland to make an equitable agreement with Spain for the security of the commerce with America — fortunate, indeed, if that does not involve the cession of Jamaica!

But, people will say, here are all our old troops out of the country; suppose some lucky adventurer should defeat one of our armies in Bohemia or Westphalia, what would happen to us? The kingdom would be left without defence. If some of our provinces revolted, what forces have we to re-establish authority? I answer that our militia would fight like little devils; that we still have some old troops in the kingdom; and that, lastly, such defeat is impossible. By whom? The Queen of Hungary is without succour; her domains are hemmed in on all sides.

France reigns everywhere without; all goes well by sea and by land; and from north to south Sweden is arresting in time the Muscovite power. But if we turn our eyes to the interior of the kingdom, what ruin! what misery! what in-

humanity! Things are now driven to such a point that rigour is impossible. I was arguing yesterday with one of the best friends of the controller-general Orry, who told me, of his own accord, that every operation had failed; that M. Orry has never known how to make economic arrangements, good receipts, equal expenses, as in a judiciary account; that he has relied entirely on the rigour of fiscal exactions. He has foreseen nothing, prepared for nothing. From the death of the Emperor he ought to have foreseen the expenditure we should have to make this summer and the following years; for he must know that the expense of troops marching through a foreign land is great. Besides which, we have naval armaments to keep up which exhaust our finances.

In the condition to which our provinces have been reduced it is necessary to reduce the taxes; instead of which they are increased by forty-seven millions; and with the old debit on the *taille*, which is now to be exacted with the utmost rigour, how is this new demand to be raised, no matter what rigorous measures are employed?

Mme. de Vintimille was the king's best friend; she had intelligence, she amused him and filled the vacuum of Mme. de Mailly's conversation; she piqued herself on her great attachment to the king; she defined him the characters around him; she made everything subserve him; hence his present tears. Mlle. de Montcavrel, youngest sister of Mme. de Mailly, has just arrived at Court; they expect to admit her into society; but she is only a little chatterer.

Mme. de Vintimille piqued herself, they say, on becoming a second Mme. de Maintenon, a solid friend who would counsel the king solely for his own good. I have had a long conversation with M. Bachelier, chiefly in relation to the marriage of the Duc de Chartres. We reviewed the letters from Bavaria in which Bachelier is urged to speak to the



The Duchesse de Châteauroux

cardinal and get him to propose the second Bavarian princess for the young prince; and asking to have his, Bachelier's, opinion (meaning that of the king) on this negotiation. Bachelier is of opinion the matter ought to be delayed, if possible, two months longer; the difficulty is that we are taken at a word on this affair, which only came about through the little hope there was then of obtaining Madame Henriette de France. Bachelier therefore wants to gain two months, after which, he says, we shall know the king's real will, — his ideas being much concealed; here lies the real difficulty.

Bachelier says that the cardinal will take the king by his vanity; that after conducting him to the point of glory in which he now is before Europe, he will involve him in a whirl of it, the effect of which will be to carry him out of his personal inclinations, which are to keep his daughter, whom he loves very much, at his own Court.

For the rest, I perceived in this conversation that Bachelier is more close-mouthed than ever; and that the king and M. Chauvelin, who inspire him in everything, have thought best to arm him with reserve in this matter. To all he told me I replied only by praises of the king and assurances of my strong belief that the king took more part in his own affairs than he said he did, that he attributed all to the cardinal in order to support him as long as he lived; but that I knew perfectly well where the honour was due, and that I was a firm believer, etc. He admitted to me that the king had worked hard while at Saint-Leger, writing despatches himself of four pages in reply to those the cardinal sent him by couriers, giving him all particulars of events in Germany.

I place in the rank of affected mysteries what Bachelier told me about the late Mme. de Vintimille, namely: that

she governed the king's mind; that she would certainly have interfered in the appointment of ministers; that, in a word, she meant to play the rôle of Mme. de Maintenon; and that the king was more infatuated than ever with the cardinal. I asked how it was possible to attribute to that old and feeble head the vigorous actions that France was doing in Europe to-day? To which he answered that it was her star which had led him to find men who suggested to him these great things. With such answers I could only laugh in his face; I put off till another time the confidence he owes me.

[October 25.] M. Orry, controller-general, is very ill, but his finances are more so. Nothing enters the coffers, and credit is extinct to an unheard-of degree. They flatter themselves it will return, but they are mistaken; discredit and want of money will increase; I have long shown this. It has all come from having lowered the value of coin after it had been high during the eight years of the regency; the debt of debtors is thereby doubled, or, to speak accurately, the silver *marc* of seventy francs has fallen to fifty francs. Thus we need in metal seven to pay what we really owe on the footing of five. The illusion continues; all is paid on the same scale; the people especially are doubled in their tribute to the king; they have not known what they were doing, and they continue to be deceived. Every one is exhausted. Paris goes on drawing in all the money of the kingdom, until at last the provinces have no more to render; poverty is there, — less the actual want of food than the total want of money; and all this because they have never seen that they were paying more than they owed. And finally even Paris was exhausted by the last famine, the king drawing more than he could obtain and increasing the taxes, and the two armies in Germany carrying much money out of the

[REDACTED]

of the Parisian treasury,
 present arid sources.
 Looking after what I see
 of his finances. This prince
 in the world, worth two
liures; he has a million
 of canal with toll rights, and
 mills, etc.; and yet for the
 been dry, and we have made
 The royal treasury is in a
 soon its essential receipts will
 city, and then the pay of the

[REDACTED]

old troops out of the country and
 have been since Charlemagne. Should
 us, who is there to quell them? with
 them? must we bring out the
 it suitable? Already riots are be-
 one at Ramorantin when wheat was
 myself was passing through the place;
 of Orléans much harassed. The
 not sufficient. We talked of this at a
 held at his house in Orléans, and agreed
 to enforce the *dixième* and the *taille* might
 winter; that it needed only an assault on
 the pillage of one coffer to give rise to a
 become general, and if so, that we had no

[REDACTED]

Orléans thinks that as soon as the Elector of
 ed emperor we shall instantly withdraw our
 Germany. I think, too, that we shall withdraw
 Austria, but not from Hanover where they are
 ward off the ill-will of England and Holland,

who will always endeavour to revive the Austrian power to oppose that of France.¹

[October 29.] People are unjust enough to blame the king for being pensive when he sees the affairs within the kingdom in such penury. They blame him also for economy, when everything warns him to be economical even in the smallest ways. Yesterday he sat down to supper at Mme. de Mailly's, she being the only woman, with the Duc de Gramont, M. de Meuse, and the Comte de Noailles. The king still felt his dinner and ate little; he drank one glass and said he could eat no more. After which he fell into a black melancholy that seemed like despondency, from which they could not rouse him, however gay they were. For my part, I know that he has good reason to think. The state in which the kingdom is, the impossibility of bringing it out of it under the administration of the cardinal, and the vow he has made to keep the cardinal until he dies — here is food enough for reflection.

When the king was arranging to give Mme. de Mailly a little apartment where she could stay all day with her little society and have, for herself, a little cook who would give her a little dinner and a little supper, he kept asking on each of these items how much it would cost. And yet they preach economy to him, while he thus preaches it to himself. Yesterday the Court musicians went to M. Orry and represented to him that they were not paid and were starving; that they were poor devils who had nothing but their pay to live on, and, even so, provisions were very dear at Versailles. To which M. Orry replied: "Really, messieurs, the king has plenty of other musicians in Germany." A worthy reply for the controller-general of finance!

¹ The War of the Austrian Succession had begun in December, 1740, by the invasion of Silesia by Frederick the Great. — *Tr.*

The cardinal has given the prettiest definition of the Duc d'Orléans; he says he catches ideas as children catch butterflies, the wings by two fingers, and then lets them go again. The duke has frequent conversations with that crazy creature the Maréchal de Noailles, who gives him plans and ideas about all sorts of things; this delights our excitable head, and I see various traces of an influence that puts me in despair; for instance: there is every appearance that he is quitting the Council because he foresees the return of M. Chauvelin, and it is I who have the most assured him of that; but in his heart his Royal Highness knows the futility of the maréchal.

[November 8.] It is in good faith that Bachelier deplores the present situation of the king, and he joins with the cardinal for a plan of union and in weeping over his state. "No one in the kingdom," he says, "leads such a dull, sad life. You should see that circle;" and the cardinal saw it the other day; he saw ennui and Morpheus reigning everywhere. This circle, this society, to which our monarch is reduced, forever as it would seem, is composed as follows: The Comtesse de Toulouse, who is or is not of the suppers as she chooses; Mme. de Mailly, dull and wearisome; the Duc d'Ayen and the Comte de Noailles, more jargon than mind, the Duc de Gramont, and little Meuse.

There is no more dignity, no more state at Court. The necessity of economy in these times, which his Majesty feels like others, is another pretext for shutting himself up in obscure pleasures. And yet, adds Bachelier, his Majesty has talent, and it is the greatest pity in the world that he does not use it. Sometimes he retires into his cabinet after dinner or after supper to answer a letter of two columns from his Eminence. He often reads his despatches, and it costs him less trouble than most persons to write much and well.

[November 9.] The Duc de Richelieu (who is at present

one of the king's favourites and goes to all the little suppers at Mme. de Mailly's) says that his Majesty is plunged in continual gloom. He says infinite good of his Majesty's nature; he told me just now that it is the greatest pity in the world that such a good disposition has been spoilt by education; that he has much intelligence and is gentle and kind, but the misfortune is that he has been taught to distrust every one; that his great lack is an apparent want of sensibility, though he showed feeling on the death of Mme. de Vintimille.

The King of Prussia has declared through his minister at The Hague that, far from concluding a private treaty with the Queen of Hungary, he regards those rumours, which are set about by her ministers, as injurious to his fame, and that he shall never make any but a general peace.

Our ministry is without head or plan. It has found it necessary to have recourse to the ideas of the Maréchal de Belleisle, whose brains I do not think very good; he has more ideas than judgment, more fire than force. This is enough to ruin France from top to bottom. I laugh with pity when I hear our great politicians and great warriors, scarcely listening to the objections made to them on the state of the finances, say: "Oh! as for money, they must find it; in a great kingdom like this, money can't be lacking; it is only a question of two or three hundred millions; they have only to force out the money, tax those farmer-generals who are so rich," etc. All such talk is very weak, for things are now at such a pass that, with the best will in the world to get money, it cannot be had.

There is talk of a lottery of fifty millions, in which the great prizes are to be annuities, for which they would create eight millions of such *rentes*; poverty and hope would make every one take shares.

They are working slowly at levying the tithe tax [dixième]; they feel the impossibility of collecting it, especially in the electoral regions and with the rigour M. Orry orders for its enforcement. There is great talk of the king's extreme economy in the matter of his table, and in the management of his amours. It is decided that for this winter his Majesty will only dine twice and sup once in public; the rest of the time the dinners and suppers will be at Mme. de Mailly's, with the little cook who serves her ordinarily; and there are never to be more than three dishes and the small company I have already named.

[November 21.] The king inclines to devotion since the death of Mme. de Vintimille. In the small society to which he has confined his life they now talk spirituality and religion. The king said to M. de Meuse, "At your age, so close to sixty, you may soon be overtaken by death." They talk of spiritual books. His Majesty imagines he can bring himself to live with Mme. de Mailly as M. le Duc lived, they say, with Mme. d'Egmont, as a friend, almost without carnal relations, unless by accident, and then the sin can be quickly confessed. It is true that M. le Duc was advanced in age compared with his Majesty, so that this project of continence may not last long. From all this, however, we see a great point: the king has feeling; he has a heart that speaks to him (how little his subjects have to-day!). He is sensible of sincere attachment when he recognizes it is felt for him; he likes kind hearts; possibly he is made to form the happiness of the country. They say he has a mind turned to petty things; but it must be considered that he encounters only petty things in his surroundings; it remains to be seen whether he will follow a taste for the petty in great things, like that good Duc d'Orléans, in whom I see no other tendency.

I say this from the words of a man who is, for some time past, in the closest familiarity with the king. One of the king's great maxims, which is the most grounded in his nature, is to separate the areas of his confidence; for instance: he would not make a friend of his minister, nor a minister of his friend; he would not confide matters of finance to the minister of Foreign Affairs, *neque vicissim*. They say, very improperly, that this shows inferiority; but I maintain that it shows, on the contrary, superiority of mind.

[December 10.] The army of the three powers, France, Bavaria, and Saxony, has taken Prague by assault; everything passed with surprising decency after the assault succeeded; the governor was taken in his bed; ladies were returning from balls, and the officers flattered them like gallant cavaliers; the rights of distinction superseded the rights of war. We did not lose a single Frenchman; the Saxons lost six men. The Elector of Bavaria despatched the news here by M. de Tavannes, a colonel of his army, who had been previously condemned to death in France for having seduced and married Mlle. de Brun, though with her consent.¹

[December 14.] I am assured that the king has changed his mistress, that nothing is more certain, and that it is kept in the deepest mystery. It is added that in consequence of this, the Comtesse de Toulouse will lose her wages, which excludes the idea that the new mistress is the Duchesse d'Antin, as many say; nevertheless she is among the best at Court; it would be reviving the name of Montespan as

¹ Louis-Henri de Saulx, Marquis de Tavannes-Mirbel. His life was a romance. He eloped with and married in 1732 his cousin Ferdinande, Marquise de Brun, who loved him, and was promised to him in childhood. Nevertheless, on complaint of her father, he was condemned to be beheaded. He escaped and served in Hungary against the Turks, and then attached himself to the Elector of Bavaria. In 1742 he obtained a pardon and returned to France. But after an interview with his cousin, which was not what he had hoped, he died of grief February 13, 1743. — Tz.

mistress of the king,—another feature of resemblance to Louis XIV. It is certain that the king has resumed his liking for Bachelier, and is shut up with him three or four hours a day. Bachelier is working also with M. Poniatowski, on the affairs of Germany; he forbids him to see the Maréchal de Noailles, who is very anxious to poke his nose into all this.

If poor Mme. de Mailly is dismissed it is only what her mediocrity of nature deserves. She is a perfect goose; she did not know how to retain her first protectors; her sister, Mme. de Vintimille, ruled her absolutely. The latter fired openly on Bachelier and M. Chauvelin; she used to say to the king, "Well, well! sire; are you going to tell it all to your *valet de chambre*?"

Horrors happened to Mme. de Vintimille's body before it was buried. The people of Versailles were full of joy at her death, saying she was a vile creature and prevented the king from living at Versailles; and that she had stolen the king from her sister, who was a good woman. She was carried with a simple shroud on her body from the palace to the hôtel de Villeroy; there the servants left her to go and drink, as often happens; the populace got in and seized her and flung petards upon her body and did all sorts of insults to it; which shows little respect for the king, and is barbarism.

[December 16.] Here is the King of Sardinia flinging himself into the Milan provinces with twenty-two thousand men, and a reserve in case of a check. From all I hear from well-informed ministers, this is a league of the Italian princes to gain their liberty and prevent Spain or the House of France from encroaching further. It is long since I have imagined this Italian league to secure the liberty of the world, and establish an equilibrium in Italy as we are establishing it to-day in Germany. And how are we doing that? By

facilitating the Germans to recover what is theirs, and breaking a great colossus which chained their liberty. Well, then ! let us do the same for Italy. Here is the King of Sardinia at the head of Italians, who have never until now dared to show heart for fear of being crushed ; but Italian courage having been preserved in Piedmont, the other regions will recover theirs beneath the banners of the King of Sardinia, by the very impulsion of the liberty to be won. The League will consist of Sardinia, Venice, Genoa and Modena, and the Pope ; to which England will lend support. These allies will share among themselves the States of the House of Austria.

But what will France do in all this ? Let things be done ; that is all I ask ; not displease Spain, if we can avoid it, but not seek to please her only to betray her, as we basely sought to do. Let Don Carlos keep the Two Sicilies ; I am willing for that ; but for the other States that are to be conquered, it is advantageous for us that they be shared among Italians, as we are now letting Germany belong to the Germans.

. [December 26.] There is great talk of resources for the treasury. The best means, in my system, is a re-coinage of the currency, with reduction of the old coins and augmentation in the new. Would to God it were already done ! It is long since I made the discovery that the internal evils of the country came originally from the unfortunate anxiety and false science which, after the death of the regent, reduced the currency ; since then debtors have become insolvent and tax-payers are crushed. The extreme need of money for the armies will lead the ministry (always, since M. Colbert, stupid on general and far-seeing views) to make this increase, but with the unfortunate intention of lowering it as soon as they can. Here is where I hope that able men will stop them. Meanwhile they will seek, through this

operation, easy loans and recoverable payments. They will find them, with a great profit, in re-coinage.

We are undertaking great expenses for the affairs of Germany, and shall soon be doing so for those of Italy; people ask what return we shall get. The answer is that it is much to have broken our rival to pieces, but the greatest of all points is to avert wars. Let us be wise as to that. Let us cease to put our glory in the loss and injury of other nations; let us convince ourselves that we shall be most prosperous when our neighbours are most so.

IX.

1742—1744.

[JANUARY 21.] It is long since I have written down the state of things; it has varied much. The Frenchman, extreme in his hopes, extreme in his despair, has believed our armies lost in Bohemia, and the Comte de Neuperg about to reduce us to beggary and captivity; it was said that M. de Ségur's corps was lost without redemption. To-day the face of things is changed; the Comte de Neuperg is going into winter-quarters, the Prussian army is advancing to take the Austrians in the rear, and all is going on well.

[January 31.] Here is the Elector of Bavaria an emperor of our making [elected emperor by the Germanic Diet as Charles VII. Jan. 24, 1742]. With regard to Italy, the King of Sardinia will have more or less of Lombardy and the Milan region. Don Philip is to have a state composed of Parma and Piacenza, Cremona and Mantua, to which may perhaps be added Corsica and Sardinia, in exchange for what he cedes to the Duc de Savoie. Tyrol is to be conquered for the Emperor, also the southern States of Austria, and Vienna is to be besieged. In a word, the Queen of Hungary will keep nothing at all except Hungary and Transylvania, with the Grand duchy of Tuscany belonging to her husband.

At Court, Bachelier plays more than ever being the cardinal's friend, though he despises him as much as ever; the king has planned this with him; they want to stop this air of division among the king's friends, about which too

much is being said; but the replacement of M. Chauvelin on the death of the cardinal is only the more certain.

I have a secretary, named M. Gigon, who always looks to the ends of the earth, and can't see the end of his nose. He contemplates the heavens with long, narrow spectacles; sensations vast, sense narrow, no judgment. He was long an excellent advocate to the Council, writing very well; I wondered at his clear way of stating the facts and means of an affair without ever conveying a word of the decision; fallible, too, in his classic quotations; for men of so little sense cannot be learned. He pretends to great things, without power to do them, and with it all, as he is a Breton, his temper is strong and ardent; his defects are to rebuff, to keep people waiting, to despise rather than dislike. There is nothing so high that it does not come within the sphere of his instinctive contempt, and the poor lad does not know why! He likes to appear, and not to be (see the "Baron de Fœneste" on that); he sees nothing but the show window; he likes great men for their bad things; he believes that a great man must be a knave, haughty, grasping, above all hated, detested, reviled, provided the said great man glories in it and is not troubled by it for a moment; he despises on principle the kindness and gentleness of those who are truly great; he admires no part of iron but its rust; I have always seen him interested by pride.

[March 7.] The cardinal is at his last gasp; nature giving way, voice choked by a cold that has lasted a month, the stomach no longer performing its functions; he weakens, he is dying, he is emaciated and withered as a mummy, he is returning to earth; he has gone for a fortnight to Issy.

He being in this state, a man of sense at Court observed to me the other day that if the cardinal had laid out a plan of government with the king, we should surely see his Majesty

begin it, and work with the ministers and at business; instead of which we see him evading this more and more, which shows that he must have some other system and plan than those of the cardinal. The man I speak of said, "We shall see, on the death of the cardinal, whether the king is below the beast or above mankind."

[June 30.] Certainly I have been too long without writing in my journal, though matters for noting are finer than ever.

We have just learned that the King of Prussia has signed his private treaty of peace with the Queen of Hungary at Breslau. He keeps Silesia, Upper and Lower, with some exchanges in Bohemia; he repays the English and Dutch the sums lent by them to the Queen of Hungary and hypothecated on Silesia, by means of which he obtains their guarantee, which to-day means nothing less than full consent.

So here is the fashion introduced and received among allies to separate and do their own business well by being the first to make a treaty! This was not done formerly; the English separated themselves first from the great alliance in 1711 and derived from it great advantages; we followed that terrible example in 1735 and obtained Lorraine; and now the same operation is done by the King of Prussia, but under far more odious circumstances, inasmuch as he leaves us in terrible embarrassment; our armies in the middle of Germany starved and vanquished, the Emperor despoiled of his hereditary States, and his empire, his property, too, in danger. All is at the mercy of the maritime powers, who have pushed things to the conclusion that we now see; for the English, miscarrying if you choose in their conquests in America, have, nevertheless, seized possession of the entire commerce of America

and are rolling in the wealth of that country, which is what they were aiming for. And we — France — alone capable of resisting this torrent, here we are exhausted and out of condition to repress this seizure even by joining ourselves more closely with Spain.

But what will come of all this? The true interests must prevail in Germany; the German princes will prefer a puny emperor, like the Elector of Bavaria. I conclude, therefore, that they will maintain him in the hereditary States for some time; supported before long by the authority which the imperial dignity will give him. Let us leave them alone; let us not mix in the matter any longer; this is the greatest service we can do to-day to our German allies.

[July 11.] The Duchesse d'Orléans has declared to her son that she will overlook her displeasure at the will of the Queen of Spain [her daughter, widow of the son of Philip V., and residing in Paris], by which the prince is left sole heir and herself passed over; also the summons sent to her to deliver up the property, — on the one condition that he will take from me his confidence and the post I fill. To which the prince replied that he should certainly not do so; that I managed his affairs very well; that they had never been so well managed. Mme. de Chelles is furious against me. I ask them why; but there is no reason, unless it be that I attend properly to the said affairs.

[July 31.] There are but three words in our language to be used as to the present state of things: *this cannot last*. It is now a question of a total change of ministry. The cardinal is childish, he lets himself be governed, he no longer knows what he does, and yet he still wants to do.

Bachelier reassures me; he is not troubled; he praises the king and says that our affairs will mend in certain hands; whence I conclude that the king is determined to apply the prompt remedy, which is a change of ministry.

[August 27.] The public is in the utmost consternation at what was announced last night: Cardinal de Tencin and my brother are made ministers of State.

This had been preceded by an air of total defeat for Cardinal de Fleury and his partisans, and an air of triumph for the party of M. Chauvelin.¹ This is the result of the powerful cabal against M. Chauvelin. It is with great grief that I have recognized in my brother from his youth up a courtier, with all the characteristics of that rôle: insincerity, contempt for virtue, hatred of the public good. Allied at first with all the ministers, but soon alienated from them by the double-dealing of his actions and his unfaithfulness towards them, he made his earliest advance through M. Chauvelin, who presently distrusted him and war was declared between them. My brother contributed to M. Chauvelin's disgrace, and united himself with the most malignant persons at Court; hence his great intimacy with the Tencins.

Cardinal de Fleury has always used as his great gun, when the king would not do as he chose, an ardent entreaty for his own retirement; that was his argument by which he obtained these two places. The king is resolved on certain things from which he will not vary; one is the return of M. Chauvelin, but never during the lifetime of the Cardinal. He will not allow the cardinal to retire,

¹ In *La Chronique du regne de Louis XV.*, vol. v., we read: "The letter was written recalling Chauvelin; it was in the hands of the Duc de Villeroy, his friend; the courier was booted and ready to start; but at the last moment the king opened the matter to the cardinal, who insisted on Argenson and Tencin." — FR. ED.

and so long as he lives and vegetates he will put only men of a certain force into the management of affairs. The public groans and will groan at seeing vice and vicious persons raised to the conduct of affairs; it corrupts, more and more, the morals of the nation. It is now for Providence to shorten the days of Cardinal de Fleury, who is causing us so many and such great evils, even if they are only passing evils.

I regard the character of Cardinal de Tencin as that of the Jesuits in general: never dangerous under a firm government, because they cling to ancient principles, and turn flexibly to whatever maintains them, with a fidelity more politic than moral.

[September, 1742.] I recall the difficulties of my career as to property, and I do not see how I ever pulled through them. It is to be said in the first place that I am not economical nor yet prodigal, neither wise nor foolish. I have no passion for property. I have, or rather I have had, a quantity of tastes; these I forbade myself for want of means. I have often meditated on what was seemly for appearance in one's state of life; and this is what saved me most, having acquired much knowledge on this point and much skill in the means of making an appearance. My grandfather was ruined by embassies; no one ever knew what became of my mother's *dot*, through the embarrassments of the MM. Caumartin. My father acquired the legal inheritance of his uncles, aunts, and maternal grandmother, and purchased property in Touraine. With this accumulated fortune and some gifts from the king, my father, being in a great office, determined to make two branches of his family and put them both in the law, so that he about divided his property in two. My share was an income [*rentes*] of 20,000 francs, and this is all that I have had, or ever shall have on my side. It is singular

what demands there have been and still are on that poor 20,000 francs a year.

I do not know how or why they arranged to marry me (certainly without consulting me) to all that would make me most unhappy. My children will be rich from their mother's property; but they doomed me to suffer poverty from that direction all my life. My father was then minister of finance and Keeper of the Seals. He was an actual prime-minister for six months; and it was during that time that they married me without consulting me. My father gave me an estate with a rental of 5000 francs, and a pension of 4000 francs, and that was all. I was to choose a rich marriage. They said they raised me by making me marry Mlle. Méliand rather than the daughter of a financier; though, with my birth, neither could have honoured me much. Now this Mlle. Méliand to whom they married me had an office of master of petitions, which came to me, and 40,000 crowns on the city at four per cent. That was all; so that hunger and thirst were marrying; and they gave me three years' subsistence at Lille, of which I received but six months: also, promise to pay me 100,000 francs one year after the death of Madame Méliand, my wife's grandmother; which M. Méliand had the goodness to advance me in bank bills precisely at the moment of the decree of May 21, 1720; that is to say, in oak-leaves [*en feuilles de chêne*]. All this fine *dot* came to me in paper of that kind; I replaced it by *rentes* on the city, and that is all that passed, or ever will pass through my hands from that sad *dot*. My wife proved to be what those who knew us know; I suffered all that any one could suffer; at last I returned her to herself, her and her property to the last penny and more too; to keep my two children from being educated by her, I paid the whole cost of their education myself.

With this, I had a pension from the king, the treasury having withdrawn that which had been given me for the services of my father; but it has been only that of a bureau of finances which could not be refused to my seniority. The cardinal, however, has prevented my receiving anything at all from the royal treasury for the last three years; but for two years the Duc d'Orléans has made me his chancellor, which place is worth 22,000 francs' income; and the above is all my fortune.

My father did not leave me a house in Paris, nor a piece of furniture, nor even a silver fork (all the furniture went into my sister's share), not even a country house; and all his estates were going to wreck and ruin through the rascality and deceitfulness of his agents; the old château d'Argenson was abandoned to the farmer; I did not have so much as a house in the town, that of my father having gone into my brother's share of the property. Yet out of my little means I have succeeded in —

Paying my debts as a bachelor — a period during which my father allowed me only 800 francs a year to supply myself with everything, and no equipage; in furnishing myself decently; in supporting for five years an expensive intendancy and making a noble's appearance; in furnishing a house in Paris with everything; in restoring Argenson, little by little, nobly, both as to park and château; in bringing up two children to marriageable age, in returning my wife's *dot* intact; in buying back my father's library, adding to it, and making it one of the best in Paris; in getting a fine collection of coins and engravings; in fitting myself out for a distant embassy, the whole cost of which for three years I bore without going to it.

And for all that, I have only 200,000 francs of debt, including the 60,000 the embassy cost me. I cannot therefore

have been foolish or imprudent. I swear that I do not love money, and am not attached to it, as may be seen by all my proceedings; but I take care of what I have; I think I am the contrary of Catilina, of whom Sallust said, *Cupidus alieni sui prodigus*; but I have much order and I know how to make an appearance. My affairs are now in such a state that with one quarter of an hour's work and attention a day, I never think of them at other times.

[October 10.] The king cannot endure his new ministers; he shows this outwardly by holding some conversation with my brother, whom he knows, but saying nothing to Cardinal de Tencin; and he does not allow either of them to approach him in private. Mme. de Mailly turns her back on the cardinal, and my brother looks much disconcerted. The two ministers are humiliated at Court; no one speaks to them or goes to see them. The ministers with departments treat them superciliously and thwart their undertakings. The king declares he never dreamed of anything else than making them simple ministers like the Maréchals de Tallard and d'Estrées, idle courtiers, who have nothing to do but attend the Council.

Cardinal de Fleury has spoken to the king about M. Chauvelin: he told him he would put his private aversion to him underfoot if he thought his services could be useful to the affairs of his Majesty; but there was one point on which he saw danger and ruin if he were ever recalled, and that was religion; that M. Chauvelin was the protector of all Jansenists. But I know that the king is armed against all such talk as much as he should be. M. Chauvelin and his partisans have only a wise toleration which tends to extinguish all parties and encourage none. He will repress Jansenism, little by little, and bring peace into the Church; instead of which the cardinal is letting himself go to all that

those perfidious, ambitious, and villanous Molinist priests insinuate into him; already persecution is increasing since Cardinal de Tencin entered the ministry.

[November 5.] Great news! the king has dismissed Mme. de Mailly to take her sister, Mme. de la Tournelle. This took place with a harshness not to be understood in a Very-Christian king. It was the sister who made him drive out the sister; she exacted her exile; and this third sister, taken as mistress, makes one believe that the second, Mme. de Vintimille, passed the same way, which makes our master a vicious man. As for me, I have always maintained that his extreme grief at the death of Mme. de Vintimille was laudable sensibility for the grief of his friend; but farewell now to virtuous sensibility; he deceived his mistress; he led Mme. de Vintimille to ingratitude; he was mourning his illegitimate loves, although this Vintimille was ugly, lean, and offensive. They say that if she had lived the king would have dismissed both Mme. de Mailly and the cardinal. He considers the son she left him, and has it often brought to him secretly in his cabinet.

Before the death of the Duchesse de Mazarin (a fourth sister, who was like a mother to Mme. de la Tournelle) the king had coveted her, but Mme. de Mazarin was odious to him from having been the first to tell the queen of his amour with Mme. de Mailly, bringing shame and dishonour upon him. He would not, therefore, seek Mme. de la Tournelle while her sister lived; but on her death he wrote the latter a consoling letter, in which there was much that was tender. She made a reply, surprising in style; the Duc de Richelieu, who is her adviser and lover, dictated it; and the following evening the king went in a blue chair to see her, disguised in an overcoat and square wig; and then and there it was a question of the lady's bargain and conditions. Well ad-

vised,¹ she desired to be a declared mistress on the footing of Mme. de Montespan; she had the advantage of being a widow, which gave more decency to the affair. She demanded a fine apartment, worthy of her position, and not to be required, like her sister, to sup and sleep in small and secret apartments; that the king should openly hold his Court in her rooms, and sup there with the same publicity; that when she wanted money she was to send her notes and obtain it at the royal treasury; that at the end of the year she should have her letters-patent as duchess verified in parliament; and that if she became pregnant it should be publicly and without concealment, and that her children should be legitimized.

At first, the king was alarmed at these conditions, and it is not known how much they were modified; but the conclusion took place. I forgot to say that the most essential condition was that poor Mme. de Mailly should be dismissed and exiled to four leagues from Court.

Mme. de Mailly is frankness itself; she is gifted with a kind heart; she is tender to her friends and relations, and has never done harm to any one; jargon and naïveté take the place in her of intelligence; she owns that she took the king only from extreme poverty and was two months without loving him; but after that her love had daily increased, and the fear of troubling her lover had caused the extreme disinterestedness of which she is to-day the victim, for she is penniless and leaves heavy debts in Paris, which the sole necessity of pleasing the king led her to incur. The king refuses to pay these debts, but it is thought that the cardinal

¹ The Duchesse de Brancas gives, shamelessly, in her Memoirs a full account of this affair, which was negotiated by herself in concert with the Duc de Richelieu. She states that Cardinal de Fleury was their confidant, and in part their adviser. — Tr.

has secret orders to pay them after abating the bills considerably. Every one witnessed her tears. She had orders to leave last Saturday and she came to the hôtel de Toulouse, where they prepared the apartment of M. de Penthièvre. She leaves to-morrow for her father's house at Nesle in Picardie.

Every one regrets her at Versailles; they dare not speak out, for they fear the king's character. Certainly the public morals and decency will suffer much from such an example. The cardinal triumphs and thinks he has nothing more to fear; his court is resplendent; he has overthrown his enemy and M. Chauvelin's friend. Cardinal de Tencin claims to have a share in this intrigue. There will now prevail at Court the counsels of intriguing and treacherous persons.

[November 22.] It was the Duc de Richelieu who arranged the parting of the king and Mme. de Mailly. The king sent for him to return here from the army in Flanders much sooner than he would otherwise have done; he advised the king to begin by writing a note every day to the mistress he wished to discard, then one every eighth day; and when told the king had already done that, he said, "That is according to my principles." In short, he is the consulting lawyer in it all, *son professore di pazzia*.

[January 6, 1743.] An affair, horrible for the reputation of the king, has just happened which must distress all citizens. It is told in two ways; I have clung to the best, but I see we must renounce it, and forget the worst if we can.

An agreement or bond, signed by the king's own hand, for the office of farmer-general at the next vacancy has appeared; it is running the market; five or six persons have been asked

if they will take it; the sum is at present 50,000 *livres* and as much more when installed. Many sensible men have refused to risk their money on this entanglement. It is said that Mabile, formerly my brother's secretary, has given in to it; and also that the matter has reached the ears of the cardinal, who has written a long letter of reprimand to the king, which has stung his Majesty very much. As soon as he received the letter he sent for MM. Orry and Maurepas, and commanded the latter to go instantly to Paris and order M. de Marville to discover and punish in an exemplary manner such insolence. Many persons were arrested, women, and lawyers, as if they had been guilty of forging this document. This was at first believed, and I myself stated everywhere the fact; but presently the prisoners were released, and the matter has stopped there, — a certain proof that the bond was genuine. They now say that the king was drunk when they made him sign it; that he leads secretly a disreputable life; that he cannot live if it goes on much longer; that his morals are growing more corrupt daily; I turn away from belief in such rumours; I persuade myself that fear of his old preceptor causes his Majesty an inertness and dread which have given him an appearance of these things, out of which he will rise on the death of this old man so execrable to France.

[January 17.] The king has at last been to see the cardinal, who is now at death's door; he was there but a moment; they counted the time as eleven minutes. The fear is universal that in that short moment the king may have been persuaded to make Cardinal de Tencin prime-minister.

[January 30.] Cardinal de Fleury died yesterday at mid-day. Never was a death made more comic by songs, epigrams and demonstrations. As soon as the death was announced to the king, his Majesty said, "Messieurs, I am now prime-minister!" And he instantly sent for the former

Bishop of Mirepoix (Jean-François Boyer), the dauphin's preceptor, and gave him the portfolio of benefices, which means the ministry and chief direction of the affairs of the Church in France. Certainly a more honest man could not have been chosen. Cardinal de Tencin and his party have had what is called a slap in the face, and there is talk now of sending that Eminence to govern his diocese of Lyon.

The reputation of the king is hourly being restored in the public mind, and so rapidly that it may soon burst forth brilliantly, like that of Henri IV. Every one is applauding the first acts of this début; what will it be if other good selections of honest men in place of those who are odious follow? What will it be if we see a good and solid peace this spring?

[February 22.] The king works much and has heart in his business; it does not appear that his ministers govern him; they say this will happen and that he will become inaccessible to others; and that all will be confined to what the said ministers choose. He has taken a strong resolution to push the war as much as possible, and beyond it. Our enemies refuse us the most reasonable peace in the world which we offer them, namely: to return to them everything, keeping only the imperial crown on the head of the Elector of Bavaria. Thus the storm forces us to extreme measures; we may now deliver ourselves up wholly to the anger of the Queen of Spain, after having protested against it, and act thus:—

1. Gain the King of Sardinia at whatever price it costs, give him Lombardy, that is to say, more than the Milan territory, and let Don Philip have the rest.

2. Order Maréchal de Broglie and his army to quit Bavaria fall back on Tyrol, conquer the southern provinces of Germany, and occupy the gorges of the entrance to Italy.

3. Encourage Spaniards, Neapolitans and Piedmontese, acting promptly in concert, to drive out the twelve thousand men the Queen of Hungary has in Italy, and make themselves masters of the whole of Italy, in which case Don Philip would have Tuscany and Parma.

4. We ourselves to remain on the defensive in Alsace, Lorraine, and Flanders.

When I told the Duc d'Orléans that there was a project of uniting France and Spain, and associating the latter with our attack, and not with hers, he answered, "That is the way to make both monarchies perish."

[March 15.] M. Orry is now in great favour, above that of the other ministers. Everything turns towards peace, foreigners begin to believe in it; M. Chauvelin is dismissed from favour.¹ The Maréchal de Belleisle well-nigh dismissed, all other fire-eaters also; the other ministers interested in the war, such as those of the army and navy, little favoured. This pleases England; honourable conditions are offered, everything is returned, the Emperor is driven to discontent, and thus to come to terms. Perhaps this was done intentionally; perhaps, also, it is only the effect of chance.

When Cardinal de Fleury alone governed the king's mind, his Majesty often escaped the old man; now that his favour is divided among several eloquent personages, they relay one another to persuade him on mild measures, and that is what is leading us to peace.

[March 19.] The character of the king is being investigated as much as possible; in doing so people pass from known truths to unknown ones; but every day they are mistaken in the consequences. Brought up by the cardinal (whom he must have admired, since he was so long obsequi-

¹ He received orders at Bourges, February 5, to go into exile, at the moment that his friends were expecting to see him recalled to Paris. — F. A. ED.

ous to him), he has contracted much of his pettiness, for the cardinal had nothing but pettiness; and if the king had had real superiority of spirit he would never have been so long subservient to him. Some of these petty things may properly enter a system and be useful to a good government, — gravity, mystery, the character of order, and imitation of the late king, which have been adopted. The king had more intelligence than the cardinal, and a soul in proportion to his birth; but he is timid, retaining people from habit, and because he shrinks from new acquaintance; he loves honest men from laziness only, because those who are false trick you, and it is a labour to be always on guard. With that exception, the king's mind gave hopes that he would understand men better than the late cardinal. What a phenomenon, therefore, to prefer M. Amelot to M. Chauvelin for Foreign Affairs, and the Maréchal de Noailles to Maréchal de Belleisle for the military operations and for the great Germanic negotiations!

Here is Maréchal de Noailles general of all the forces of France from the Rhine to the sea, and master of moving our troops arbitrarily for the defence of our frontier. Here is Maréchal de Belleisle wholly dismissed and almost exiled to Bizy. Here is M. Amelot master of all negotiations, except those with Rome, which are conducted by Cardinal de Tencin. We shall see what fruits all this will produce, what peace, what glory. Certainly we can procure peace by abandoning the Emperor, as they are doing now; will the nation be spiritless enough after that to pour incense on the foolish leaders of the State? Wisdom does not consist only in abstention from folly; nor even in abstention from too lofty designs; it asks for sagacity in difficult times, such as the Noailles, Orrys, Amelots, and Boyers have not, nor even certain minds more trained in the jargon of the world

and the intrigues of a Court, such as M. de Maurepas, my brother, and Cardinal de Tencin. What is needed is frankness [*candeur*] naïve and sincere, reputation well-deserved, penetration to the bottom of designs, and skill in execution. We have only to look at the administration of the finances by M. Orry to know what sort of fruits will be gathered: great expedients, fine calculations; but all the means employed will be to the detriment of the kingdom, the interior of which is infected with irreparable poverty.

[March 23.] For myself I propose to exhibit poverty without misery. All the places in my household will become single; I have one fine porter with much gold lace; one *valet de chambre*, one footman, one coachman, two horses, and one servant-woman. I give my people the money to spend and I live on a *pot-au-feu* and a chicken. I keep the same furnished apartment as it is, a very honourable one, and, above all, very convenient and near to the public bureaux. I shall devote myself to the bureaux of the Council, hold them all, and go there regularly; I shall confine my studies to their service for the next few years, resuming what I have left behind me in knowledge of that kind. I have an honest lawyer, named Estève, retired like myself from the tumult of affairs; I consult him, and look over with him the ordinances. In this way I shall pass in this century for a man of moderation, a philosopher, attached to my duty, enlightened nevertheless, and capable, more fitted for offices than those who are in them. This rôle has its beauty; and if ambition fed it, it might result in some great elevation.

[April 4.] M. de B . . . describes the king as much to be feared in the species of intercourse that goes on between him and the ministers; he roars sometimes with anger, and only restrains himself at other times by an effort of habit.

The cardinal affected great calmness in order to inspire the king with proper moderation of his temper; his Eminence never showed any vivacity himself for this reason.

It is certain that after the new opening of the reign, or a little before it, two extraordinary and very harsh acts were done; one, the dismissal of Mme. de Mailly; the other, the aggravation of M. Chauvelin's exile. His Majesty might have sent away a mistress of whom he was weary; but the wrong consists in the manner of doing so,—the harshness, the hardness, the implacability; and then the want of generosity with which the future of that miserable woman has been arranged. But for the other matter, the increased exile of M. Chauvelin, here is what M. de B . . . has told me:—

It is certain that the king had much correspondence with the said M. Chauvelin during the last year of his ministry. They say now, after events, that this correspondence was entered into for the purpose of unmasking M. Chauvelin, proving his ingratitude to the cardinal, and involving him in error for all time. They have also since asserted that the king had taken a positive aversion to the unfortunate minister; that he, his jests, his familiarity, his laugh, in fact all his person had greatly displeased the king. As to that, I ask if a State can be properly governed by giving way, in the choice of men, to capricious tastes or distastes for their persons.

The king received a package from M. Chauvelin, and it was this which caused his further exile; he received it from an under-valet, who had himself received it from one of the king's servants, but who this man was is not known. The king has said that he shall never tell his name; that they may open M. Chauvelin's lips if he is willing, but he requests that he himself may hear no more about it. It is known that there were four documents in the package:

1. A letter of *envoi* from M. Chauvelin in four lines, which ended thus: "You know, monsieur, the sentiments with which," etc.; 2. A long and noble letter to the king, written recently at Bourges, which greatly touched his Majesty; 3. A long memorial dated from Grosbois concerning the war of 1734 and the peace of 1735, in which all the faults of the cardinal were exposed, and all that M. Chauvelin had done to repair them — as to this the king said that all the statements therein made were false; 4. A memorial more secret, and sealed with a talisman, which reminded his Majesty of his secret correspondence with M. Chauvelin and explained what had happened since.

The king received this package at midnight, and read the papers till two in the morning. The next day, on leaving the Council, he gave them to M. de Maurepas to read, telling that minister to give him his opinion upon them. At the end of fifteen minutes the king sent for the papers, regretting that he had given the minister the secret memorial. M. de Maurepas brought them back and, like a shrewd man, told the king he had had time to read only the long memorial, but not the secret one. The king took them back and ordered M. Chauvelin into deeper exile at Issoire.

Within a day or two the king has changed that exile to Riom, a more convenient and agreeable town, saying that he did so on account of Mme. Chauvelin's health, and that it was not to be regarded as a favour done to her husband. Nothing could be proposed for M. Chauvelin's son; for the king has always an uncontrollable aversion to him as a little boy because, without being presented to his Majesty, he never stirred from his side during a hunt, and behaved like a little scamp.

It appears from these facts that the king is very hard, and insensible to humanity; that he cares but little how his

kingdom is governed, inasmuch as the ministers, good or bad, are chosen or rejected from petty prejudice or temper; that he has the self-will of a child, and that his vanity puts him ridiculously on his guard against allowing it to be said that he is governed. He may have been annoyed by some air of authority taken, as he thought, by M. Chauvelin as a former and able minister; he may have thought of the shame attached to having disgraced this man at the bidding of the cardinal. But, in truth, he loves only mystery, without caring for good effects. For the last two months that his Majesty has governed for himself, what effects have we seen? What strokes of able policy under circumstances so urgent? What allies have we won? Of what enemy have we rid ourselves?

[May 19.] The king shows for his work and in his conduct to the ministers a disgust and irritability that do not seem natural. To look at his Majesty's person and to know him one cannot conceive how he could have fallen into such indifference as to all that is most important to his honour and his interests. The rumour runs of a total change in the ministry, particularly in regard to M. Amelot, whom the king, they say, will no longer listen to, not being able to understand him on account of his stuttering.

The Abbé de Saint-Pierre, when dying, performed his Christian duties, having his family and his valets around him. But here is a singular thing: having finished these duties, he recalled the chaplain and told him he had nothing to reproach himself with except this very action; that he did not believe a word of such things; that for a long time he had not been false to truth except on this occasion; that he had so acted as a vile compliance to his family and household; that he had endeavoured to be the confessor

of truth all his life, etc. I do not believe that such an avowal was ever made by any one but him.

He spoke during his last days only in monosyllables. When he said, "Fin;" they thought he asked for food; but he repeated, "Fin-is." They told him he would recover; he said, "Resource, no; hope, yes." He was eighty-six years old.

The Cardinal de Tencin and my brother, now minister of war, have given each other mutual pledges; it is to be hoped they will keep them! The cardinal was in Rome when raised to the ministry. Since then he has played the modest with a proud and haughty countenance; he dismisses audiences, and wishes only to prove himself useful without appearing necessary. The Maréchal de Noailles is with the army, and, as our satirists say, when the grand plumes are gone the pin-feathers show. But this bond between my brother and Cardinal de Tencin, though concealed externally, will cause jealousy and aversion on the part of the other ministers towards the maréchal, whom they do not regard as their choice; hence will come leagues offensive and defensive.

But all depends on the character of the king. What is he at bottom?—impenetrable and indefinable. As for me, I give him still a year and a day. There may be something consistent in his course if he has only kept on the ministers of the cardinal to avoid the reputation of a fool oppressed by an old pedagogue seeking at once to play the free man; he may use for six months or a year these ministers of Cardinal de Fleury, to test them, to show their vacuity, to let them lose credit with the public, and then dismiss them to take others,—all this, however, at the risk of injuring his kingdom.

So these poor ministers find themselves to-day, M. Amelot

especially, absolutely confounded, and awaiting some blow about to strike them; it is said that the king neither listens nor attends to them, and it is thought that the change will be made at Whitsuntide. That great feast is often the time for change of ministry.

[June 7.] Very singular things are reported of the king: a cruel obstinacy about the war in Bavaria, total inability to arrest the course of our reverses, or retire wisely from this unhappy enterprise, so that we are now sending more troops down, to our last man, and to certain death. None of the ministers dare to speak to his Majesty of the necessity of stopping this evil; it must indeed be very difficult if men like them, of some courage rather than any virtue, dare not break the ice. This is what it is to be valets. People say below their breaths that all this must end in some catastrophe — what will it be?

Sometimes they excuse the king, oftener they condemn him; as for me, who by nature love him with passion, I seize eagerly on whatever can whiten and raise him.

His Majesty has just given his nomination to the cardinalate to the Archbishop of Bourges and has appointed him his ambassador to Rome, — a choice much applauded and not instigated by the Jesuit cabal; also that of the Bishop of Soissons, who obtains the nomination of the King of England at the king's request. Honest men in every way, who will not be fire-eaters. But, they say, the king dismissed Mme. de Mailly with inhumanity. How many things may be excused by human passions, especially in youth. The place was taken, the sister had won him, he could not have the one unless the other went; I would rather excuse him for voluptuousness than for ingratitude and indifference.

Every one flings a stone at the ministers for what is

going on; my brother is especially the butt of everybody for the ill-success of a war so badly managed; all the world, they say, knows this except the ministers.

I am surprised sometimes to find I have more perspicacity than receptivity; I comprehend the ideas of others, but having comprehended them I usually go beyond them. That can come only from a certain fruitfulness of mind, rather than from mental vivacity. I prefer to produce, rather than receive. My lack of ordinary vivacity of mind causes me to have less memory in the morning than in the evening, when the mind, being more in motion, acts through the effect of the relation of ideas.

[July 9.] One of the palace ladies, who gossip about their mistress just as lady's-maids do about theirs, tells me that the queen has an extremely susceptible heart, though religion manages the rest of her individuality. She is more coquettish than any woman of her Court; she likes to please men, and to have them show it, to ogle and to be ogled. My brother is on the best terms with her; he spends three or four hours at a time in her apartments — for her Majesty has liberty to receive whom she likes. She calls him "Cadet," and Cardinal de Tencin, who has the same privileges with her Majesty as he, calls him so likewise.

The queen is never willing to be alone in her room, nor to stay there after supper; she must go and talk in the room of some lady of the palace, especially that of the Duchesse de Villars, her lady-in-waiting. There she finds the said cardinal, M. de Moncrif, the Abbé de Broglie, and Tressan, ensign of the body-guards. There they all slander politely, but the best of it is that they tell smutty things, which the queen likes much.

Last year the queen had a long conversation with the Duc

d'Orléans, who suddenly flung himself on his knees and asked pardon of God for the improper thoughts he had had of her. She told this to her dearest friends. The queen still regrets not having married him as she expected to do, instead of being Queen of France. "We should have led," she says, "such a pretty life; while my husband was at Sainte-Geneviève, I could be at the Carmelites."

[July 30.] The pen falls from the hand at all that we now see happening to our France. The Maréchal de Broglie has just completed the ruin of our affairs in Germany and has brought back our troops, abandoning baggage and wounded, who have been killed in cold blood. It was all the same to him provided he ruined the affairs of the Emperor and put a rope round his neck; he has been more than satisfied!

The Duc de Gramont and the Maréchal de Noailles have rendered our shame at Dettingen irremediable [June 27]; we are without resources and at the mercy of our enemies, who may now measure our destruction by their desires. How have we been led? No, consanguinity cannot prevent me from saying that there never was so bad a ministry of war as the present, so little attached to the country, so willing for public losses, so desirous for its own particular little good, so stupidly caustic, and with so few resources.

A revolution is certain in this country; it is crumbling at its foundations. There is nothing to do but to detach one's self from one's country and prepare to pass under other masters and another form of government.

[October.] Contempt is a very useful passion to certain men, essential to some men. By it, shyness is overcome; a sense of superiority is acquired which brings a man through the worst places; he becomes what is called self-confident, and if that is founded on some solid qualities he

turns them to account, he puts them in the light, and he represses in others what arrests his progress.

As for me, I have always lacked that quality; and if I could ever acquire it by meditation and effort I should be sure of success. I was badly brought-up; they repressed in me certain flashes rare in a modest nature,—they made me ashamed of them; thus, too ready to esteem fine qualities in others, too despondent of myself, I have shone little, I have yielded willingly to all that was superior to me; hence, ill-success in all that I have wished for; whereas my brother, with views less just, less strong, more mediocre, has passed for an eagle, and risen in proportion. Sometimes I have taken upon me to esteem myself more highly, and to force myself to despise others, and I have, all of a sudden, found in this what was lacking to my freedom of action; and then, adding some attention to myself, some design of pleasing, I have found that I rose to be what I really am.

[January 17, 1744.] The Chambers of parliament were assembled this morning to register the letters-patent of the gift of the Duchy of Châteauroux to Mme. de la Tournelle; this patent gives the duchy not only to her, but to her male children, declaring that it reverts to the crown in case of failure of male issue. The preamble of the letters-patent contain the motives of the gift: the great services rendered to France by the House of Mailly, the personal attachment of the lady and the services she has rendered to the queen, the virtues and rare and singular qualities of mind and heart with which the said lady is endowed. Parliament listened gravely to these flowery encomiums of the king upon his mistress, and concluded by enregistering the document.

[April 2.] The Princesse de Carignan tells me that a few days ago, the king being with Mme. de Châteauroux, M. de Maurepas went there to see him, accompanied by M. Amelot;

that the king, coming back after speaking with them, remarked that assuredly he could not stand them much longer; that he must change those two ministers and take some one whom no one doubted. Whereupon people have cast their eyes on Cardinal de Tencin; but what appearance is there that he was referred to? for the public doubts him thoroughly. Others think that it must be M. Chauvelin. In answer to the prospect of Cardinal de Tencin for prime-minister, some one said: "At least we shall regain in him a reputation for ability, if he cannot restore to us that of good faith. It is recovering something, at any rate; we shall not be despised in both directions."

But let us not impute everything to the monarch; his greatest defect is obstinacy; and this defect is a great one. Louis XV. is not lazy, as people think; accustomed though he is to lead a useless life, he lends himself to work, if he does not give himself; he is too weak in public matters to govern by his own head, but, with assistance, he will do as well as others. He showed his docility under a minister by his conduct under Cardinal de Fleury; all that he lacked then was an abler guide. But consider what the ministry is which the king to-day maintains and which is hurrying us onward to a universal upheaval of the State:—

M. de Maurepas, a dandy, frivolous, a man of common ideas, to whom the cupidity of the government has given a chance. To-day everything is made to rest on the prosperity of a commerce that is grasping and odious to our neighbours, and on this basis they believe with the faith of martyrs that England can never be sufficiently crushed, nor our league with Spain too close. M. de Maurepas is minister of marine and commerce; he inspires M. Amelot, minister of foreign affairs; the latter owes him his being and his support, and, incapable of any views of his own, he has no soul but

that of M. de Maurepas. These two little personages, common and inconsiderable, have dragged us towards Spain as the only safety of this country; but this political maxim being combated (without their perceiving it) by other interests, they are patching up and replastering with difficulty our alliance with Spain. Nothing is done on principles.

The other ministers are afraid of the king's sulks, and yet they want to attract to themselves some favour and some power. He of the war ministry [d'Argenson the younger] is in this plight; he of the finance [Orry] is not listened to except in his own domain. He fears the displacement with which he has been threatened even during the time of the late cardinal; he is short of political views, is tainted from the first with the false ideas of commerce that exist only in Cadiz and the galleons.

Obstinacy prevailing over all things, the king brings mere self-will where he ought to show prudence joined to firmness. At every moment they are playing double or quits, and we are on the eve of a revolution. The war is to be carried into Flanders; that is precisely the strong field of the maritime powers, where their forces can best overcome our weakness. Without king, without ministers, almost without generals, without troops, without officers, without courage, without discipline, without money, without men in the kingdom — such is the situation into which the imbecility of the late cardinal and the mischievous self-will of his pupil have placed us. Add to that that we are without reputation for good faith, ability, or force.

Seek another such point in history — where will you find it? And with what are we not threatened if our neighbours know enough of our situation to profit by it! The English do know it. What did Lord Stairs say last year in his harangues at The Hague? They are keeping silence to-day, but their

undertakings are none the less dangerous; we excite them by the temptation of our fleets in Toulon and by the pretended introduction of Prince Edward Stuart.

[April 23.] M. Amelot, minister of Foreign Affairs, was dismissed last night; M. de Maurepas, his friend, was charged with delivering the order. He is crushed with grief; he collected his more important papers and sent them to the king. When M. de Maurepas announced his downfall to him, he said, *Hodie tibi, cras mihi*. Cardinal de Tencin worked two hours to-day with M. de Maurepas, which was regarded as indicating his approaching appointment to the ministry of Foreign Affairs; but this evening it is certain that it will not be either he or M. de Chavigny.

The king is about to go to the army in Flanders. Here is what my brother [minister of war] tells me: The king said to him yesterday that there would be more business during the campaign than he expected; and this morning his Majesty explained what it was, namely: that he should himself sign the despatches on foreign affairs. My brother said to him, "But shall I not write them?" The king answered that he himself would compose them. He takes du Theil to the army; and this head-clerk of the foreign office will probably draw up the despatches.

The king begins to-morrow to give audiences to the ambassadors, to hear them and reply to them, which will make a great stir.

I said to my brother, "But are you going to this campaign to play the part of prime-minister?" He answered: "You may believe that all this means the destruction of the ministry; it is the little cabinets, the Noailles, M. de Richelieu, and the mistress who want to destroy us that they may reign; you see how they treat us."

M. de Maurepas is sent to inspect the sea-ports while the

king is at the war, which gives him an air of dismissal; and they say that Cardinal de Tencin is to go to his archbishopric of Lyon during the same period.

[May 3.] The minister of war started yesterday at six o'clock in the morning for Flanders; the king was to start to-day, but we have heard no cannon, therefore he has not passed through Paris; the roads have been mended direct from La Muette to Bourget. Every one goes to the army: the grand-master, the chamberlain, the kitchen department and provisions; there is only the mistress to follow.

[May 5.] The king supped at Peronne with the minister of war, and slept at Valenciennes. The Duchesse de Châteauroux and her sister slept at Plaisance, Duverney's house; from there they go to Séchelles, and thence to Lille, where M. de Boufflers is arranging houses for them at government cost; so that the king can go to his suppers at Lille as he does at Versailles. This gives him the air of a subjugated man rather than one of eager passions.

[May 14.] I have a copy of a letter written by the king to the dauphin in reply to one in which the latter begged permission to follow him to the army. His Majesty replies that the safety of the dauphin is too precious until he is married; he promises that after that he will make no journey like the present without him, although it is to be hoped that, in future, wars may not be common in France; and he must learn to love his people, etc.

The Duc de Richelieu is more of a favourite than ever; he is now regarded as the author of everything. It was he who inspired the elevation of Maréchal de Noailles, certain that he could let him fall by withdrawing his hand; in this way he clears his own path towards becoming prime-minister. It was he who wrung from the king the favours and granteurs granted to Mme. de Châteauroux (of whom, they say,

his Majesty is very weary); and it is he who has caused the generalship to be given to the Prince de Conti.

[May 23.] The king has done me the honour to appoint me his counsellor at the royal Council; a place which gives me a session and work with his Majesty in person once a week. The condition, written by the king's own hand, is that I shall quit the affairs of the Duc d'Orléans. This condition is in the letter to the chancellor, which I have read, and it is even written twice, as if from fear of its being forgotten; and a postscript to the letter to the controller-general adds that one cannot serve two masters. I am therefore obliged to leave the household of the Duc d'Orléans, under the most honourable and fortunate circumstances.

[June 30.] The king has begun to show himself a king at the head of his armies; and it must be allowed that this is done in good taste. Since the death of the cardinal he has still seemed in leading-strings; he has awaited, as I foretold, a glorious moment; he now seems attentive, brave, talks to his troops, is prudent, punctual, hard-working, and, above all, discreet. No one knows as yet what that discretion covers. As for me, I think there will be a change of ministry for the better all arranged for his return. It is thought a blemish on his fame to have brought his mistress to the army, thus degrading the princesses and the other great ladies who accompany him. Let us agree that this can be judged only by prejudice; and what a foolish prejudice it is to oppose pleasures that do no wrong to any one. The Flemish are superstitious; they have been told that three sisters have been the king's mistresses, and they are scandalized at the arrival of this one at Lille. Two hours after his arrival the barracks took fire, and they declare it was the effect of divine wrath.

[July 31.] The Duc de Richelieu came to see me a

moment as he passed through Paris on his way to join the king, who is seriously ill at Metz. How well I knew the woes of my country in listening to the talk on which I started him touching the course we ought to follow to obtain peace! It is with such talk that the king is rocked continually. Let us remember that he is always surrounded by courtiers whose whole fortune turns on this war. The Maréchal de Noailles, a man of intelligence, but seldom accurate, of moderate worth, who piques himself on understanding the interior affairs of the kingdom better than any one, is the only man, perhaps, who sometimes preaches peace; but his mind is sophistical; and he proposes bad means to it; he wants an alliance with Spain, and that's enough. Thus, all the army, all the people on promotion, the favourites, the minister of war, they all preach this smoke of glory; no one preaches the need of peace, which is great; they would not allow the controller-general to meet the king anywhere on the march, for he knows the evils within the kingdom, and he might give the king an account of them. The only sight that the king is allowed to see is that of abundance, plaudits, and joy.

The duchess-mistress has fallen ill at Reims; it was thought to be an eruption; but it prolonged the sojourn at Reims, so that there was none at Châlons. The king, during Mme. de Châteauroux's illness, talked of nothing else but how and where she should be buried, and what her tomb should be.

[August 5.] Were I to-day a favourite of the king, his prime-minister, or in charge of the finances and the most highly trusted of the ministers, such as Maximilien de Sully was to Henri IV., I would persuade his Majesty to think solely, for the next ten years, of paying his debts and ameliorating the condition of his kingdom; for, by so doing, at the

end of ten years he would be the greatest king on earth. I should add the advice to live in Paris, in which there would be economy. He could inhabit the Louvre and Tuileries, such as they are, driving out the sellers in the temple, — people who have nothing to do there, but to whom lodgings have been given, — on paying a few indemnities.

[October, 1744.] The place of secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is not yet given; this interruption of that ministry still continues. They said it was the high favour of Maréchal de Noailles that caused it to be kept for him; my brother tells me it means the fall of the present ministry, which the favourites and seigneurs are resolved to destroy. But it is to be observed that the influence of the Noailles has fallen, yet the same arrangement continues. There must, therefore, be some other cause; what can it be, if not that it concerns Chauvelin, and that his Majesty is following his former plan by very dissimulating and impenetrable ways.

[November 7.] The news is spread that the king has appointed as minister of Foreign Affairs M. de Villeneuve, counsellor of State and formerly ambassador to the Ottoman Porte. He is not here, he is at Marseille, his native place; they say that he is much vexed at the appointment and will refuse it. The king has declared that he wishes to fill this office by men who have been on embassies, and all the other ministries by those who have passed certain degrees in them; for instance, for the ministry of the navy, it is desirable to have been intendants of the navy, and for a cure in a city, to have studied five years in a famous university. M. de Villeneuve is seventy-one years old, ugly as sin, four feet tall, but lively, with a Provençal accent. He gained 80,000 francs in *rentes* during his Turkish ministry. He is a clever man, — very great if he proves as good a negotiator as he is a merchant.

[November 14.] The king returned to Paris to-day, where his Majesty is to remain four days. There were few cries of "Vive le roi!" the rumour that he has taken back the Châteauroux does harm. Certainly the appearance of the Tuileries seemed to me very fine; it was a striking spectacle, this assemblage of all the grandees, and above all, the great ladies of the Court in the galleries of the Tuileries to see their king return a conqueror from his first campaign. The illuminations of the good city were disturbed by a high wind, which put them all out at the end of an hour.

[November 15.] M. de Villeneuve has done this morning a most unheard-of action, never yet seen, and never to be seen again. He has begged the king to excuse him, alleging a quantity of reasons why he should not accept the office of secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The king said to him, "Monsieur, your reasons are only too good, — age, health, and other arrangements."

[November 17.] The king was much diverted to-day to see the Jesuit fathers' gowns very wet as they received him on their portico in the pouring rain, when his Majesty went to their "Salut" service, and stood himself a long time in the rain.

It is certain that the king has taken back Mme. de Châteauroux; that such has been the object of his stay in Paris; that were it not for an inflammatory cold the beautiful duchess would have appeared as usual at the queen's circle; and that the two exiles have been sacrificed to her, without which she refused to see the king again. Love is a furious master who knocks down all obstacles.¹

¹ During an alarming illness of the king at Metz, the priests exacted, before giving him the sacraments, that Mme. de Châteauroux should be dismissed. The king ordered the Duc de Richelieu to remove her; but on his return he recalled her. At the moment of receiving this summons she was taken ill and died in Paris, December 8, 1744. — Tr.

[November 18.] My brother told me this morning that the king talked to him a long time yesterday respecting men who might be capable of filling the office of minister of Foreign Affairs, vacant since M. de Villeneuve declined it. His Majesty went over the whole list of the Council who might be available; it was principally a question of M. le Nain, intendant of Languedoc, and the last who was named was I; on which the king said a good deal about me; and my brother said in reply all that could make this choice of me acceptable; on which his Majesty kept perfect silence as to his wishes and that of others. The following is what my brother afterwards told me on the views held about the peace in case I was appointed: that he himself desired it strongly, but saw the innumerable and increasing difficulties; that the king desired it also, but it would not be done by the Council; that it would be for me to judge what I should carry about it to the Council, and what I should reserve; that the Council, though not corrupted, was full of very extraordinary opinions on the elevation of the House of Bavaria; that some of the members were too devoted to Spain and pushed too far their fears of the Cadiz commerce; that peace would never be made by the council, but by the king alone; that the ministry of Foreign Affairs demanded the greatest secrecy, the greatest mystery, which must be pushed to a greater degree than could be believed, partly to suit the king's taste, partly for the good of the thing itself; that as for the composition of the bureaux, there was one man of whom it would be necessary to make great use, namely, the Abbé de la Ville, whom I had already thought of myself. He added that the Maréchal de Noailles was only a fool who changed his ideas at every moment; that the Maréchal de Belleisle was too Bavarian and Prussian; that Cardinal de Tencin was a priest of mediocre abilities and a great ma-

nœuvrer; that the King of Prussia sincerely desired peace, but only such as should leave him master in the empire; that he was guided by great political convictions; that the present state of things would be followed by a Protestant league, at the head of which he would put himself.

[November 18, 1744.] The king has appointed me this evening Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

[Here the Journal stops abruptly, and is not resumed until February, 1747, the period at which the Marquis d'Argenson's ministry ended and he retired to private life. This void in his Journal he filled by what he called "Memoirs of my Ministry, beginning at the End of 1744 and finishing at the Beginning of 1747." These papers, which are preserved in manuscript in the Library of the Louvre, were to have been incorporated in a work of four volumes with the above title.¹ Though written by the Marquis d'Argenson they are ostensibly addressed to him by one of his secretaries, M. C——, a fictitious personage; this was doubtless done to enable him to speak of himself and his ministry with greater freedom than he could use if writing in the first person. The preliminary sketch of the Court and its principal personages was written under his own name.

A selection from these papers is given in the next and concluding chapter of this volume.]

¹ See Appendix.

X.

1744—1747.

MEMOIRS OF THE MINISTRY.

Characters of the principal personages.

THE events that I am about to relate will be better understood if the personages whose influence bore upon them are better known. Let us speak first of the stage on which they played their parts.

[*The Court.*] The best king is he who has most people and least Court. We can judge of this from Louis XIV., to whom flattery gave the name of Great: he was great through his pride, but not from any benefits he did the nation; he founded, so to speak, *the Court* by building for it a private capital [Versailles]; he wished to make it numerous, magnificent, and mistress of the government. The expense and the disorders thus entailed become unbearable in the long run; and the misfortune is that under kings who are simple and kind such abuses will increase as a matter of *honour*, while under haughty and supercilious kings they will increase through the effervescence of their passions. No one remarked to Louis XIV. that in this he imitated Darius, and neglected the example of Alexander and all the other great princes celebrated in history; for in proportion to the augmentation of the Court our two kings, who appear to be adored there, have seen prosperity become extinct in the

provinces, morals become corrupt, luxury impoverish the nation, our armies less well commanded, the laws less well administered, and the finances embarrassed.

Henri IV. did truly deserve the title of Great; not only for his bravery, but for his goodness [*bonté*]; he knew how to choose and to sustain a great minister for the details of the interior; his prudence and his experience presided over everything. He resided in Paris in the midst of his people; no one had inspired him to hate the Parisians, and distrust the submission of his subjects. *As he was without fear he went about without escort*; he kept a guard for show only, not for protection, and the necessary number of servants. The courtiers lived in their own houses; they were not involved in ruinous expenses in order to be at Court; consequently, favours were not *due* to them, as they are to-day. The princes and princesses of the Court found enough society among the nobility of the city. Henri IV. went to his country-houses without a Court and without ministers; the capital of the kingdom was not changed week by week as it is to-day, when the seat of public business moves about with the monarch; no one talked then of the suffrage of the cabals and cabinets in great affairs, —all was managed from one centre; economy was great because of good order and good sense; the royal dignity was admired and respected for itself, and not for the false varnish of a vain prodigality.

The present numerous and magnificent Court (the bait of fools and wicked persons) will never make the splendour of royalty; there is always enough stateliness in decency; the great officers and the rich inhabitants of the city should share it; the capital attracts foreigners, the Court repulses them by its disdainfulness. The Court and city united would always have enough splendour for a monarchy;

republics lack this, but they present better lessons to the inquiring traveller.

Let us convince ourselves, therefore, that the greatest vice of monarchical governments is what is called *the Court*. To begin with the monarch: it is thence that he draws his vices, and thence that the vices of his subjects pour out as if from the box of Pandora. It is there that kings perpetually hear it said to them: "Abuse your authority; the laws obey your will; immolate all to your supreme grandeur; the people are born to toil and tears, they must be governed by a rod of iron; if not oppressed they will oppress you." Flattery is there disguised as wisdom and as love; poisons are there refined, and virtue is there despised; there, too, the piety of princes becomes a scourge; it destroys religion and morals because it inspires only hypocrisy and persecution.

And so *there is not a man of honour at Court*: if any one begins a reputation for integrity he soon degrades it; esteem, and he who desires to be the object of it, are infected by the morals of a Court. The two idols there are fortune and fashion; how can we expect that their worship should not manifest the vices and caprices that are adapted to them? (Virtue, even without rigidity, admits nothing that is contrary to it; all infraction is vice.) Thus, customs have prevailed over principles, and judgment disapproves in the depths of the conscience what habit and fear have made us tolerate in the great.

Whatever there is of emulation in serious affairs goes no farther than to *works of outward show*; it is useless, and even injurious to *be*; to *appear* is the necessary thing, though it would often cost less effort to be of actual value than to make one's self seem of value. The first of talents is *cleverness*; the last, and most dangerous is to be a great

man. In republics great merit attracts jealousy; in Courts it excites wrath; it is not reputation that is wanted, it is the good offices of others; one must know how to advance a person, how to give one's self an appearance of being useful to others and able to sustain one's self. All is subjected to the commerce and calculations of private interests; and the more refined and intelligent our courtiers become, the more horrible and fraudulent is this commerce of protection.

Damon was born virtuous, his ancestors had served the State well in times when men were admitted to serve it with freedom and virtue; he opened his eyes, he made reflections; it will be thought they were on the means to do better still; no, they were solely to imagine palliatives against rules of morality and the inconveniences of integrity; he conformed himself to his century, and the more he found himself advanced at Court, the more discoveries he made in this career of relaxations, the more his sophistries hid from him his corruption beneath the appearances of fashionable honour.

Devout piety at Court is only a gloomy cabal, miserly and inimical to pleasure; its censure blackens all that does not belong to its sect,—its final object seeming to be to make the king a Jesuit or at least a Capucin, and to repeat often the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. The little virtue that one still sees at Court can sustain itself only by *stupidity*; those who still profess it are laughed at, but endured; they are the fools of the Court. Sometimes they get a little credit by a few evil deeds that escape them, and then they are rated as men, like the rest.

The path of ruin at Court is full of roses and praises; but open ruin is thought ridiculous; not even pity is granted to those who once pleased so well, but have ended in this

way; contempt terminates the admiration of magnificence. The beauties of the Court have the same fate. Their brilliancy brought them adorers, their frailty and their pliancy increase the worship paid to them; but discredit follows close, and the loss of their charms would render them the most odious of beings were it not for the hypocrisy of devotion by which they sustain themselves.

The "Misanthrope" of the comedy tells all this, from which he concludes that men should leave the Court and retire to a desert; steadfast and courageous virtue ought to conclude otherwise. Men who by their birth and their offices are inseparably bound to the Court, like the Duc d'Orléans, ought to live there more, in order to correct what they can by their example and by the encouragements that depend upon them; if they did this their authority would be further increased by the frequentation of men of virtue without excess. At present there is a total lack of such havens of reason.

The basis of the character of ministers is that of chief courtiers; the well-being of the reign depends on the will the monarch may have to draw them out of this state, which must be done by shrewd discernment and a firm will to support them in their *true* functions. The ministers ought to be the censors of the Court, the judges, but they are now the trucklers to that multitude of courtiers and valets: how can they be expected to judge and command equals who are able to injure and ruin them? Consequently, they court them and depend upon them; a minister who stands ill with courtiers soon has ill-turns done him with the king; nothing but the public voice could defend him; but no one at Court ever speaks of or stipulates for the public.

Henri III. took his ministers from among his minions. Henri IV. found by chance in M. de Sully a minister who

became the enemy of courtiers as soon as he was in office ; the king often thwarted him, but he always sustained him. Louis XIII. was subjugated by Cardinal de Richelieu (whom he killed with worry over his petty bickerings). Louis XIV. gave much dignity and money to his ministers, and obtained in return great furtherance of his designs. Louis XV. let Cardinal de Fleury reign for seventeen years ; this minister, in spite of his great power, always feared the Court, always remembered his first estate of priestling and humble courtier ; since his death the Court of France has resembled in its intrigues the harem of Constantinople.

The vices of courtiers go farther in a minister, for he has in power what the courtiers have only in influence ; disabilities and injustices are the current coin of his intrigue ; from judge he comes down to be attorney and solicitor ; his flattery is more dangerous for the king ; he desires the monarch's weakness, and makes it his hope and his reliance. Will it be believed that there is nothing exaggerated in this picture ?

It is a harsh word, that of *tyranny* ; it is a blasphemy on the lips of a subject ; the harshness of it can be saved only by separating it wholly from the person of a kind prince, beloved, but facile through kindness. Tyranny might be excused under Titus, and under Louis XII., if they had despoiled themselves of their power to the point of having personally no more than the Doge of Venice, — by whose mere name all is done in that government. The counteraction of the kind nature of such a prince by the treachery of his ministers spreads a certain politeness over their injustice ; it becomes a *specious tyranny*, a sly and malignant affability which softens harshness and quits iniquity for a moment only to resume it, reserving to itself stigmas and vengeance ; it is an *uncertain power* which well knows its moments of impunity ; it exercises its cruelties without violence ; it spares

bodies and rends hearts. Men are no longer beheaded as under Cardinal de Richelieu, and only factious and turbulent hotheads are exiled now; but men are dishonoured on the slightest chance; all respect is cut off from those whose influence is gone; all the evil that enemies choose to say of them is whispered in the ear of their friends: "Do not frequent that man, *non eris amicus Cæsaris*," and lo! he is a man with the plague in the midst of that society of slaves.

As for governing the people, ministers stop revolts in their very beginning; they apply themselves to make the cause of such murmurings forgotten for a few months; then, when they are renewed the habit of discussing them has made minds docile. The ministers triumph over Frenchmen by calmness and obstinacy; they disarm the foreign enemy by deceptive benefits — for all our treaties of peace during the last hundred years have been more the seeds of war than war has ever been the preparer of peace. The tradition of a ministry is reduced to making all artifices accepted as political maxims. In truth, we shall not see riots or general revolutions in France; this is for the kingdom a slow fever, not violent; we shall see the nation crumbling at its foundations, and falling, so to speak, in pieces.

[*The King.*] Louis XV. has had in his favour all the miracles of Providence. Chosen above his elders to reign, his life preserved, his health strengthened, escaping many dangers in his childhood and youth,—all these things mark in him the finger of God, as he is the Lord's Anointed. The devout say that in these wonders there is enough to convert the most hardened sinner; wise men think him more bound than others to love God and his people.

It is the *goodness* [*bonté*] of princes that makes them great; from that comes justice; otherwise it is violence that com-

mands by making itself feared; its reign is passing, it has but that moment of use and of illusion. But, if we examine carefully in what way royalty has prevailed in the world, we shall find that the founders of monarchies have won confidence by meriting esteem and by benefits; that their successors have lived, so to speak, on the reputation of their authors; that power is shaken by tyranny and is re-established by happy reigns.

Princes are badly brought-up; everything flatters them, nothing corrects them; above all, they learn to ignore and to mistake the essential thing, namely, *knowledge of men*. If they had that discernment, they would choose, even though their natures were bad, good men to second them, because their interests demand it; if they are good they will choose honest men like themselves; then let them follow their bent and all will go well. But here comes in an unfortunate *affectation* to trouble this chain of consequences. They have no brilliancy of mind, but they wish to have about them *beaux esprits* and men of fashion; they believe and they discern on the word of others; in this way confidence is given to malicious and perverse persons; virtue is rejected on the slightest imputation of ridicule.

Louis XV. would have wished for peace, tranquillity, and even for the glory of his reign; but men are deceived on that very point of glory as soon as they are on a throne, or in possession of great riches. The intoxication of grandeur and the snares of flatterers present the essence of honour, its means and its obstacles, as quite other than they are; nevertheless, nature prevails. Morpheus awakened goes to sleep again, the false conqueror desists, impetuous action ill-sustained is worse than indolence. If we apply these principles to the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. we shall find the imprudence of kings and the unhappiness of

peoples; we shall conclude that the second has had more mind, more goodness, but less energy than the first.

In the art of reigning we ought to distinguish the points that go well of themselves — and even better if let alone or with the simplest inspection rather than anxious cares — from those which demand watchfulness and activity. Alas! our present government holds in continual contempt these two classes of management; they curb and reprimand liberty, and they reform no abuses. A king asleep on the throne would at least be serviceable for letting alone those things that go well of themselves; in such things this nation has great advantages, — situation, climate, the honour and the intelligence of our inhabitants. Society, like Nature, sows and restores for itself; we have not, like the Roman empire, an inundation of barbarism to fear from without; religion, in order to flourish, only asks from government to stop fanaticism and persecution by repressing the intrigues of hypocrites.

All these things will accomplish themselves if nothing is done injudiciously. Great enterprises are impossible or harmful to such a reign; let it never hearken to the insinuations or the restless desires of intrigue; let it turn away the projects of so-called great ministers (like Alberoni) zealous for the grandeur of sovereign houses and so devoid of care for the happiness of the people; let it prune out and abrogate useless laws; and with these negative qualities, doing no harm, it will do an immensity of good.

But, when the vessel leaks, much activity, much labour is needed, or it founders. Such is the case in dangerous foreign alliances, when views are contrary to our interests and an enemy's counsel has seduced our own. Such was the case with Louis XIII. when Cardinal de Richelieu took the helm of affairs; such is the case when evils are rife throughout the

land, when one party weakens the other, when Court and cabinet exhaust the provinces, and when the rich alone are heard, to the prejudice of other citizens.

Then the king ought to awake and not to yield again to repose until the evil is extirpated to its roots. He ought to change his ministers and Council; there is all danger in delay; he ought to load with confidence those who deserve it, and dismiss those whom he distrusts; he ought to unite second causes. The views of ministers decide the government in monarchies. We spoke above of the famous Duc de Sully; without him the great Henri might perhaps have been confounded in the crowd of kings, and France, unhappy at the time of his accession, might have become still weaker. Enough said; let us *apply it*, and we shall have shown the character of Louis XV. with as much fidelity as respect.¹

The personal work of the king ought not to be estimated by the hours he gives to it, nor by his assistance at the councils, but by the interest he takes in it. It is not by slight desires or momentary devotion that the affairs of a great office can be conducted, but by a constant will always bent to that object. Recreation, relaxation, may be allowed, falterings, feebleness may interrupt the work, but these must ever hold rank as *exceptions*; the serious purpose must be the rule and the practice.

Oh! how well that word "feebleness" [*faiblesse*] expresses the passions of certain men endowed with kindness and pliancy; they sin only in lacking strength to resist; they see and approve the better, and follow the worse; their manhood is merely a prolonged childhood; they often take the shadow

¹ In some places d'Argenson's style is obscure; where this is the case the translation is made as literal as possible, so that the reader may judge of the meaning for himself. It must be remembered that these papers are notes and memoranda jotted down as the reflections occurred, and were never prepared by the writer for publication. — Tr.

of pleasure for pleasure itself; juvenility, childish play, vanity without pride, acts of firmness which are nought but obstinacy and unruliness—they think without reflecting; they deduce consequences without applying them or acting in view of them; they have opinions without will or desires; a deceitful calm makes them forget all foreseen dangers.

With this sad nature a prince believes that he governs well when he does not govern at all; everything deceives him, and he is the first of his own seducers; he has favourites without predilection for them, and ministers without confidence in them.

Louis XV. is cherished by his people without his ever, as yet, having done them any good; Louis XIII. was even more so, after causing many woes to France by his ill-conducted and unfortunate wars. Let us consider from this that our Frenchmen are the people of all others most given to love their kings; they penetrate their character; they take their intentions for actions; certainly, it is by some extreme fatality that they are not the richest and most fortunate people on earth; we must attribute the chief cause of this to those remains of *aristocracy* which still rule the Court, and to the pretensions of a *military government*.

The first of expedients to save a government infected with abuses would be to appoint a prime-minister, and lay upon the legal tribunals the enforcement and odium of the laws. Thus did the Romans when they gave themselves a dictator and created commissioners from the senate under the names of *triumvirs*, *decemvirs*, etc.; thus they did in Venice with the "Council of Ten." But the very reasons which demand this here hold within them precisely that which will defeat it, namely the self-love (ill-understood) of the king, the authority of favourites, and the false interests of the ministers.

Do you want the details of this character? You will find them in all Frenchmen, as is well known to foreigners; contrasts in all things, effects of an imagination too volatile and too much mistress of the judgment; talents wasted; good taste that cannot be fixed; punctuality in little things, inconstancy and lack of plan in great ones; the gift for drawing and a taste for architecture in small conveniences, nothing granted to grand designs; a spirit of toying imprudently in public affairs; the habit of saying witty things and silly ones; memory without recollection; patience and anger; promptitude and kindness; habit and inconstancy; mystery and indiscretion; eagerness for new pleasures, disgust and ennui; sensibility of the moment, general and absolute apathy succeeding it; despair at the loss of a mistress, infidelity which outraged her; favourites without friends, esteem without confidence; a kind master without humanity.

[*The Queen*.¹] The Marquise de Prie, mistress of M. le Duc de Bourbon raised the queen to the throne, where she gives nothing but good examples. Mme. de Prie made an excellent choice according to her views: fecundity, piety, gentleness, humanity, and, above all, a great incapacity for public affairs. It was still further needful to this Court policy that the queen should be a woman without attractions and without coquetry, who should retain her husband through duty only and the necessity of giving heirs to the throne.

The queen is ignorant of the art of attaching her people to her; she is neither loved nor hated; she attracts by some attentions, but she repels by making her regard too common. Mind is wanting to the heart; she puts nothing of herself

¹ Marie Leczinska, daughter of Stanislas, King of Poland; born 1703; married to Louis XV. in 1725, when he was 15 years old, and she 22.

into what she says or what she pretends to feel; she scarcely has any countenance, so to speak, of her own; she is often mistaken in laughter or tears, she laughs at fatal events and is grieved by comic ones; she is charitable from bigotry, and devout with a foreign superstition that is more ridiculous than edifying in the eyes of Frenchmen. She is not without intelligence; but Nature has refused her all genius and the spirit of system.

Her rank is a rallying banner, and since the king has taken declared mistresses, those who cry scandal attach themselves to her to displease the king and the favourite. Their mutterings are proportioned to the royal patience; the king is wise and kind; he endures their talk, provided it does not go so far as insolence; but he deceives himself as to the intrigue and the hypocrisy, he does not perceive all the dangers and evil consequences. From his youth he has been made to endure them; he may even think he finds political counterpoise and ideas in them, also some support to religion. It is true, however, that these Court cabals would embarrass him if they had at their head stronger souls and minds more dissimulating and enterprising.

Thus the queen, without wishing it, has a party; the dauphin and Mesdames [her daughters] have the confidence of ill-trained children in her; and, as Nature is malignant in women and children, they talk more ill than well of the king when together; they groan about his amours, and they maltreat his mistress. Priests, monks, and devout persons are united with them; the queen's jealousy, and the bull Unigenitus are the two features of this cabal. A few ministers enter it with guilty views; they are always supposing the greatest misfortune of a State, namely, the death of the king; but his Majesty makes no objection. These ministers, on leaving the Council, go to the queen and tell her the

secrets of State; they make themselves useful at times in smoothing the domestic quarrels.

King Stanislas comes every year to see his daughter; he gives her hardly any advice, thinking her on the right path and as circumspect as she is docile. He is not a man of intrigue, that good prince; he is ignorant of a Court, knows the means of good government, is skilful in morals as a Chinese, an excellent statesman, a true patriot-king, knowing how to make himself served, and ordering none but useful undertakings in his little sovereignty of Lorraine.

[*The Dauphin.*¹] No one can tell the cause that makes the minds of Parisians brilliant in their childhood only to render them secretive and stupid in their youth; later, passions speak, and waken them only to make them libertines; they do not acquire maturity until they attain old age.

Princes, far from being exempt from this rule, are more subject to it than others; I believe that this comes from the species of education given to them; the most expensive masters are the worst in France; the governors and tutors in great families are chosen by intrigue and on false reputations; they all have aims to advance, whether by the protection of the royal parents or by the ascendancy they gain over the minds of their pupils; French impatience presses forward these aims and renders their means coarse and pernicious. Such masters boast much of the little they have done; they exaggerate some prettiness they have put into the child. This education is mere humbug; precepts have less influence than example; we need virtuous and intellectual men as teachers and comrades, conversations intelli-

¹ Louis de France, born 1729, died 1763 married (1) the Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain, (2) the Princesse Marie-Josèphe de Saxe, the mother of Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Madame Élisabeth. — TR.

gent, amusing, and profitable; insinuating all, commanding nothing, permitting gaily, remonstrating with interest and friendship; rigidity as to honour and affairs of the heart; tolerance on all that relates to the mind and to innocent pleasures.

The education of great people has one admirable thing; it preserves baptismal purity and ignorance of all theory and practice contrary to chastity until marriage; the youth is kept in sight, his body profits and his mind awakes in other ways than in dissipation; but just as they have been passed from women to men for their education, so they return to women at their entrance into the world, and the more they have been restrained, the more they escape and the more they become dupes of the artfulness of coquettes. In Catholic countries we give children a wholly clerical education, we surround them with priests, who spare no pains in convincing them of the interests of the Church rather than of the love of God; in this way princes are trained to be superstitious, bigots, and persecutors.

But there was worse than this in the education of the heir-presumptive to the throne. Cardinal de Fleury was not a tyrant; but his want of genius often inspired him with the maxims of tyranny, which he followed, unconscious that he did so. He believed himself immortal; he was convinced that the good of the State demanded the continuation of his absolute power; for this reason he took pains to place about the dauphin none but men of no merit, in order that by meddling in nothing they should give no umbrage to his authority. He succeeded in his first object; he chose the most foolish men in the kingdom for these important employments; but, as for intrigues at Court, he found out that it is the ordinary minds that cabal the most, and meddle most with what does not concern them.

It was under such masters that the dauphin at first showed in his childhood much intelligence and curiosity after knowledge ; at that time more advanced than others, he has since become more backward than he should be at his age. Yet those who see him closely insist that his mind maintains itself. He is extremely stout, dislikes all motion and all exercises, is without passions, without even tastes ; everything stifles him, nothing animates him ; if the mind still sparkles with a few flashes it is a dying fire, which fat and piety will soon extinguish ; he will presently have passed the heyday of life without pleasures, and his youth without love. Nature will scarcely have been known to him ; how should he know how to discern men, their characters, their craft (which is the great science of kings) ? Loving nothing, men come in old age to hating every one from sheer ill-humour, and so hating, they are hated themselves. They have learned to criticise before they have acted, before they know whether they could do better than those they criticise ; they do not make for themselves a character, which La Bruyère says is the worst thing of all.

[*The late Dauphine, Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain.*]

We possessed this princess in France for eighteen months only ; her loss was great ; she would have been very fruitful, which is the first quality to desire in women of that rank ; she would never have done harm in the kingdom, and that is all we ask of them. As for usefulness, we release them from that, — “the lilies spin not.” Nevertheless our queens are regents when the king their son is a minor ; this is a bad custom of our laws ; the regency of our queens has always been unfortunate. The ascendancy they obtain over their husbands is one of the great troubles of a monarchy. We have just seen an instance of it in Spain in the case

of Philip V., and there is another in Naples with Don Carlos.

All influence of women is bad ; we have said above that the less Court a king has, the better he governs ; the more that Court becomes a harem, the worse it is. One dares not advance the following opinion, out of respect for religion and morals, namely : that the ascendancy of legitimate wives over devout husbands has caused greater evils than the influence of favourites.

This princess was grave and taciturn ; she had externally that Spanish pride which so little suits the French temperament ; she was red-haired, but concealed it carefully, even from her husband (that colour is dishonouring in France). To console the dauphin after her death, persons have never ceased revealing to him, or inventing, her defects. She behaved towards him with the one intention of governing him, — a difficult enterprise in France, where passions have no constancy. She never left him, amusing him as best she could without contradicting him ; she had a sinister countenance, a delicate skin, and a well-distributed plumpness. She left Spain with ample instructions from her mother to captivate her husband and be useful to Spanish interests. One ought to say in her praise that all she retained of these lessons was the part that related to the dauphin ; she became as good a Frenchwoman as if she had been born at Versailles ; she knew all the horrors of her mother's character [Élisabeth Farnese, second wife of Philip V.] ; they were beginning to hate her in the Council of Madrid, and she would have been beloved in France had she lived longer. After her death, the king found in her desk a secret cipher, of which she had made little use.

[*The second Dauphine.*¹] The second marriage of the

¹ Marie-Josèphe, Princess of Saxony, married to the dauphin at Versailles, February 9, 1747. — *Tr.*

Dauphin was urgent, and very important to decide: he needed a healthy and prolific princess. Her personal qualities were of more importance than the political conditions of the alliance, and if the latter were found advantageous to our designs, they were only in the second order of interest. I can say that the king took this laudable view, and it was as a father rather than as a king that he examined with me the various marriages which were suitable for his son, after putting aside that of Spain. I had several conversations with his Majesty on this subject. . . .

To the Princess of Saxony fell the destiny of this great marriage. No one was ever more in luck than the *Princesse Joséphe*, now the dauphine; for this fate would naturally have fallen to her sister, who was three years her elder; but her star willed that on the very day of the Spanish dauphine's death the sister's marriage to the Elector of Bavaria was announced at the Dresden Court. What a difference in destiny between the two sisters! The youngest passed in all ways before the eldest, whose marriage did not take place till the month of May following; but she bore the great spectacle of the happiness and grandeur of her younger sister with an heroic courage of which women are seldom capable. The *Princesse Joséphe* is tall and well-made; they call her suspiciously blond (like the late dauphine); her great gentleness comes, they say, from mediocrity of mind.

As soon as my courier was despatched to Warsaw, where the Saxon Court then was, to announce the agreeable news of the king's choice, I had orders to work at the contract, the ceremonial, and all preparatives, so that the marriage might take place before Lent. I can say that few such orders have ever been better or more promptly executed in so little time. I will not enter here upon the details

of this illustrious affair. I obtained from the Court of Dresden all I wanted; there was not, I may say, a cadence lost, nor an advantageous point in the ceremony omitted. I conformed principally to that of the Dauphine of Bavaria [wife of Monseigneur, Louis XIV.'s son]. I shut myself up in the afternoons at Fontainebleau with two clerks, with whom I made all the scrutinies and drew up all the necessary orders for this work, which was immense, considering how pressed for time we were. It is true that the king never refused me extra hours when I went to ask him for decisions, and his Majesty encouraged me by the approbation he gave to my diligence and accuracy.

Moreover the affair was secret; divine it who could, but it was not acknowledged beforehand to any but those who were absolutely necessary to it. The king said no word of it to his Council; M. de Maurepas questioned his Majesty a score of times to obtain an avowal of it; finally it was not told to him until it was necessary to engrave the silver plate for the dauphine and to give precise orders for the departure of her household, which belongs to his department. Everything passed through me alone until the matter was accomplished, and without the slightest mistake. Who would have thought then that the measures of a Court cabal were so well taken that I should receive my dismissal on the very day that the marriage took place in Dresden! Yet that is what actually happened. My enemies thought that I had gained too much honour in this affair; that I had played the leading rôle, and that of a prime-minister rather than that of simple secretary of State. Courtiers envy above all the advantage of standing well with princesses, and through them with foreign courts; they are always founding plans for the future on that; they consider grandeur to come, through intrigue,

greater than all reality that ministers may attain. My friends advised me to attach myself to the dauphin; on the contrary, I drew myself further away. I said that God would preserve me from ever having to work with any other prince than the king, who is fifteen years younger than I and has good health.

I could foresee that the dauphin would like his new wife better in the end than he did before he knew her; for he went with a very ill grace to this marriage. During the lifetime of his first wife, all his prejudices were in favour of Spain; the Queen of Spain governed him absolutely in those days. When I took the proxies for him to sign I saw his ill-humour by his manner of doing so; it was a purely childish fit of temper, which soon passed off. To-day (October, 1747) he loves the dauphine much; she does not govern him like the other; she yields entirely to his humour; the king and Mesdames love her tenderly; she has conquered the ill-temper of the queen, who affected for some time to hate in her the fortunate rival of her father. They are awaiting with impatience the fruits of the marriage.

The King of Poland knew well the obligations he was under to me. My son went to Dresden with M. de Richelieu, and he met with all the attentions he could expect. The Saxon Court was saddened by my dismissal; they had resolved to make me a considerable present. I had procured for the Comte de Bruhl a magnificent Gobelins tapestry, which I sent him in the name of the king. They offered me the order of the Black Eagle; I refused it, not approving that ministers should wear any other orders than those of their king. I received the gift of a Dresden service which is worth more than twenty thousand crowns. It was manufactured expressly for me that it might be the

more elegant and each piece perfect; consequently, it did not reach me till three months after my dismissal. As it had been given to me during the time when I was still in office I begged the king to accept it to be placed in one of his country-houses, and was not altogether refused. When it arrived, I renewed the request; my brother took charge of presenting it, and brought me word from the king that he desired me to keep the service. My son, who was at the celebration of the marriage in Dresden, also had a present of ten thousand livres in the shape of a snuff-box set with diamonds.

[*The late Duchesse de Châteauroux — Marie-Anne de Mailly-Nesle.*] This favourite was haughty, proud, with an assumption of great dignity; they declare that she had good sense and even much judgment; nevertheless, one would not think so from her conduct. To explain this contradiction we must look for the passions which ruled her and consider the vicious causes which triumphed over duty and even over nature. Beauty, birth, want of means in a sumptuous Court, some objects of vengeance, friends and dependants to advance, these were the passions which metamorphosed, shamelessly, a well-born woman into a courtesan—that term is due to all those who give themselves for gain; though they think there is glory in a prostitution that will live in history.

Mme. de Châteauroux quitted a lover whom she loved, to give herself to the king without love; she did not even take the trouble to feign it. He adored her very caprices; in that she recalled the memory of Mme. de Montespan at the old Court. She was not devoted to the vile interest of enriching herself, like the woman who succeeded her, but her business man took care of that and worked our

finances finely. She herself had higher aims; the Duc de Richelieu was her principal adviser. To govern, to reign, to incite to the greatest injustice, to counsel fatal wars, this is what filled the soul of this proud mistress of the king, as usurpations fill the minds of conquerors; and while the laws punish far less crimes in plebeian courtesans and robbers, those that destroy the human species are made famous.

She exacted the dismissal of her sister (Mme. de Mailly) as the first price of her favours; yet she owed her the greatest obligations. She followed the king to the army in the campaign in Flanders of 1744, that she might not lose the thread of her influence. This proceeding displeased the nation. During the first attack of the great illness the king had at Metz, which was expected to be fatal, she took possession of him, but was publicly driven away by an express order from the lips of the king himself when he got into the hands of the priests. On his return to Versailles, the king recalled her to Court, and her influence would have triumphed more than ever, but that God willed otherwise; in the act of receiving that recall she was struck with the illness of which she died.

This event happened a few weeks after my installation as minister; and I was witness of the extreme grief of the king.

[*The Marquise de Pompadour, Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson.*] Shortly after Mme. de Châteauroux's death a new connection extinguished the king's affliction. At the wedding of the dauphin, February 9, 1747, a young Parisian beauty appeared, to whom the king flung the handkerchief like the sultan to his odalisques, no sooner in love than gratified. The pleasure of the senses was the sole attraction of this love; neither the heart nor the character were known, and

perhaps they are not yet known. Ephemeral loves among the prettiest Parisian women were now resolved upon, provided no risks to health were run; there was no longer any pretence of escaping the empire of love; but practice such as this is impossible to feeling hearts.

The king found in Mme. d'Étioles (soon after made Marquise de Pompadour) a mistress well-prepared to govern him; alluring his nature by the charm of gentleness, she soon won all and obtained the most extreme authority that can be procured by confidence, comfort, secrecy, and all the manœuvres that render courtesans by profession more completely mistresses of their lovers, without the help of intelligence, than are women of capacity and worth.

Her mother, a noted prostitute of the Palais-Royal, had brought her up to fill some considerable post of the same kind. She married her to a farmer-general, M. d'Étioles, but her ambition was not satisfied; she lived to see her daughter's triumph, and died soon after.

Mme. de Pompadour is therefore of the lowest extraction. She is fair and white, without features, but gifted with graces and talents. She is tall, but rather ill-made. All the Court ballets roll to-day on the same subject as the pastoral of Issé; in them she represents a shepherdess beloved of Apollo, who loves him without knowing his divinity; she bears away the prize of dance and song; she acts comedy; she imitates and counterfeits whom and what she will, passions, and even virtue if necessary; education has perfected nature to excel in the rôle she means to play; she is the graceful instrument of sad designs. She has enormously enriched herself, and is now the object of public hatred. The king thinks he rules her; she rules him, she makes him see merit in those who have no reputation, nor the appearance of any. It is an adroit, imperious friendship

rather than a real passion which is to-day producing such great effects on our government; were it a violent passion there might be some hope of change, of the reproaches of conscience, of the efficacy of the public outcry.

[*M. de Maurepas*.¹] A French *petit-maitre*, brilliant, witty, installed into the ministry when twenty-six years old; senior of the council at thirty-five, decided yet always mistaken; talking much, listening little; treating trifles seriously and great objects with levity — there is what constitutes the essence of that man.

M. de Maurepas, gifted with quick perception and an accurate memory, has acquired extensive knowledge, but the bad taste of the Court has presided over his fickle studies. He possesses much curious information, but he has never given close attention to serious objects which he ought to fathom. All goes off in utterance; he listens badly, and speaks before he thinks; the exercise of his soul consists wholly in that of the imagination and the memory; his wit seems unwearying; he is more brilliant at night than in the morning; he feels no need of being wound up by food or sleep; it is movement that he wants; repose is good only for those who meditate. Hence no accuracy, no judgment, no foresight in affairs, no plan; all is the system of the moment; epigram, repartee, *concetti*, glitter, wiles, sarcasm, satire, disdain, and contempt without examination.

Sometimes virtue attracts his praise, but such eulogies are without enthusiasm; these external approbations are only part of the eloquence of the century; they are uttered in spite of himself, as the devil praises the saints through the mouth of the possessed of devils.

¹ Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Comte de Maurepas; born 1701, died 1781. He was made minister of the Marine in 1723, at the age of 22, not 26 as stated above. Prime-minister in 1774 under Louis XIV. — Tr.

The heart is formed on the taste. That of M. de Maurepas became paralyzed very early, like those of other courtiers; he regarded his friends as toys and his neighbours as sheep. Harshness soon succeeded, however, to indifference; he now claims that all shall be subject to his pretended superiority of mind, which abases others without elevating itself. He despises not only God, but divinity; not only the king, but royalty; he is a free-thinker with levity, he denies fate and providence, but he adores fashion and frivolity. At a Court like ours such a personage must inevitably become a lawgiver, and this has happened; he gives the tone; he has formed a thousand ridiculous imitators; this has given influence to vice and suppressed virtue and good sense.

They attribute to him much intellect; and this reputation is a passport which secures admiration for his faults and follies; no ministry has ever been worse than his. He laughs at the woes of the State; he sees and foresees no remedies; and he practises that which increases these woes all he can. He and Maréchal de Noailles plume themselves on their great hatred to the King of Prussia, our sole ally. They are always for the interests of Austria in the Council; they spare the Court of Spain for the favours and revenge they hope to get from it. It is said that the clerks of the ministry of the Marine are pensioners of the British Court; secrets of State are divulged by the indiscretion of these two ministers, who would never remain united unless it were to do harm; I have the honour of having them as enemies. . . .

Through the department of Paris [joined to the ministry of Marine] M. de Maurepas has the police of this great city and the protection of sciences and the fine-arts under his care. His inspection of the police is wholly confined to an unofficial spying; in the arts he has promoted a reign of bad

taste and flattery; he has sown squabbles in the academies and irritated learned men and artists about their work — he has knocked off our spectacles. The king fears him and has never liked him. I have said above how his Majesty respects the bad discernment of the Court. He has personal reasons for hating this minister, who has been accused of poisoning the Duchesse de Châteauroux.¹ No one has ever spoken of the king with such irreverence; he has opposed intrigues to intrigues in order to maintain himself; he has attached himself to the royal family by detaching it from him who is the head of it; he forms factions amid even gentleness and virtue. In spite of all this, the faults of his ministry found excuses in its luck and in the hope of its resources, when the hatred of the Duc de Richelieu broke the ice around the king and accused M. de Maurepas openly under several heads. The king has listened to him, and results may follow.

[*The Duc de Richelieu.*²] The Duc de Richelieu (since Maréchal de France) is the favourite of the king every time that he takes the trouble to be so; but he is not content with the most flattering familiarity with his master if he does not get out of it the increase he covets for his fortunes, especially a ministry; he is possessed with a desire to enter the Council. He governed for some months during the favour of the late Duchesse de Châteauroux; he had with his Majesty all the credit of that vicious negotiation, and all the shame of it with the public; he had to bear the risks and the dislikes it brought him.

¹ Mme. de Châteauroux was his enemy; on the king's return from the campaign in Flanders he sent M. de Maurepas to her with an order (which she was awaiting) for her return to Court. In the act of receiving it she was taken ill, and died within a few hours — *Ta.*

² Louis-François-Armand Duplessis, Duc et Maréchal de Richelieu; born 1696, died 1788.

He now confines himself to the ambition of some day commanding the armies; he hopes for this, and is preparing for it more by presumption than by labour. The military fear this promotion; they all say they do not wish to be of his army; they accuse him of levity, precipitation, and heedlessness.

Though he has personal merit, he places all his hopes on blind favour, — on the graces that please, on seduction and charm, not on justice nor on the merit of his actions; he exaggerates the opinion we ought to have of the defects of the monarchy and the frailties of our century; he esteems what he disdains, but he dissuades his friends from good intentions and virtue; he is a misanthrope of the Court, which he hates and follows. He possesses all the experience and sagacity necessary to fathom men, but he reckons them more by their foibles than their good qualities; he studies the first and casts the second aside as out of place; he despises our ministers, but takes good care not to offend them; nevertheless, his satirical humour shows through his specious compliances and affabilities; he is feared and detested.

His history has been singular down to the present day; ever since he was twelve years of age he has made himself talked of in the world; before his majority he had been three times sent to the Bastille for causes that made him illustrious as a Court hero: once for playing the lover to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, once for a duel, and lastly for a conspiracy against the State. Since then he has restored and raised himself; he has been in favour and in disgrace. His love of voluptuous pleasures has more of ostentation in it than of real delight; he is prodigal without magnificence or generosity; he is saving but without prudence; in his domestic affairs he shows both skilful management and disorder. Such is the practical side of a French Alcibiades —

they call him thus, and this likeness has a reduced value in France to what it had in Greece; ours is a spirited and courageous *petit-maitre*, but he is not yet known to be a general or a statesman.

He has been much the fashion among women. The pretensions and jealousies of coquettes have procured him a quantity of *bonnes fortunes*,—never a passion, but much debauchery; he has deceived a weak sex; he has taken senses for heart; he is not fortunate enough to possess a friend; he is frank through heedlessness, distrustful through contempt of mankind and shrewdness, disobliging from insensibility and misanthropy. Such is the sad character of a nation gay and volatile as ours; the more superiority there is, the more contrasts there are in qualities which destroy each other. A soaring mind without breadth and without application sends a man born for great things into the class of ordinary ones; pride has destroyed in him all semblance of the citizen; successful wrong has arrested maturity at an age when other men usually console themselves for the loss of vigour by the loss of passions and errors also, leaving him an old butterfly, dabbling in politics, with some wit, false enthusiasms, importance without consideration,—in short, a sorry old age; such is the career of our old seigneurs who have played the rôle of personages.

[*The Maréchal de Belleisle*.¹] This general, negotiator, intendant, and haranguer is one of the greatest geniuses of the little century in which we live—the rarity makes the value. He would have shone but little in Greece or Rome, in those times of antiquity when love of country and of liberty developed early the talents and the heroism of men; but, under

¹ Charles-Louis-Auguste Fouquet, Comte and Duc de Belleisle, Maréchal de France; born 1684, died 1761.

an absolute monarchy, under ministers changing perpetually through the caprices of a seraglio, it is best to guard generosity from envy, advance by sapping only, work underground like moles, and enter public affairs for self-interests only. One has to be a long time valet to become master; and even then there is always tribute to be paid to intrigue, always reverses to bear with prosperities, if Fortune ceases to uphold the side we have fastened to. This is what the celebrated Fouquet, grandfather of the Maréchal de Belleisle, experienced; and is what he himself has had to bear in prison and exile.

Hence our French personages have a certain cringing air mingled with haughtiness, which does not proclaim a hero, more circumspection than prudence, more dexterity than urbanity, more caresses than affability, few sentiments, heedlessness in enterprise, slowness in action, ill-luck in decisions, and especially no patriotism. Every man is the centre of his own circle. Vast minds may possess the details of many departments at once, but they gather them all in to the profit of their own; thus the soldier wants to put everything in a blaze, the negotiator everything into craft, the financier cares only for filling his coffers; who cares for the welfare of the people? No one. If the people murmur, they say that is the usual way; they think only of repressing them, not of satisfying them.

Thus what our statesmen have of genius is only one scourge the more on earth; they had better never have been born, inasmuch as they are solely employed on the public injury. M. de Belleisle is eloquent, persuasive, and of great courage; his ambition is not fixed; friend of excess in all things, if he were prime-minister he would want to be regent, master of the palace, and usurper of the throne. Master of all power, what must we suppose he would aspire to? — to

vain glory for the nation, that which destroys instead of elevating, which acquires always and enjoys never. He governs his own affairs with the same uneasy and vicious ambition; more solicitous of honours and magnificence than of happiness; more concerned about show than good order; borrowing always, never economizing; fruitful in resources, devoid of foresight; rushing after the future, and blind to the present state of things.

He piques himself on his constancy and loyalty to old acquaintances; he is not absolutely devoid of all feeling; he divides his heart between nature and ambition; from this division he has obtained a domestic happiness unknown to other courtiers; he has friends, and he is adored by his servants. His high position and influence have procured him followers devoted to his interests. He has made it a habit to conceal his extravagant pretensions behind a composed air of wisdom and even apathy; yet the inward fire of imagination sparkles the more for this restraint. You see in him an erect and motionless statue proposing to you the devastation of empires, the agitation of republics, and conducting you by reasoned consequences to the most dangerous troubles for the State, which must prosecute these purposes according to its means. The great defect of his character is not knowing where to stop; he can find perfection nowhere but in the infinite.

Charged with conducting the election of an emperor who was not of the new House of Austria, he persuaded our Court to follow a system of destroying wholly the Pragmatic sanction, and of relegating to Hungary the heiress of Austria. Governor of Metz, he wanted all the roads and all the commerce of Europe to concentrate in that city, and so make it the metropolis of the universe. This is his manner of being carried away by whatever he takes into his mind; execu-

tion is always lacking in what he proposes, in spite of the fecundity of means and the activity he spends upon it. Worthy of being a leader by his talents, he should never, because of his defects, be employed otherwise than as a second.

His brother, the Chevalier de Belleisle, is thought to be his Minerva; people are mistaken; the younger, far from inspiring the views of the elder, simply plays the part of moderator to him; he restrains him as much as he can. He is a pedantic man, with a narrow brain, prudent and of little virtue, but filled with a great love for his brother.

[*First general measures taken in the ministry of Foreign Affairs after November, 1744.*] It is impossible to say which had done most harm to our Foreign Affairs, the vacancy in this ministry of six months, caused by the dismissal of M. Amelot, or the seven years of his ministry under the secret, but absolute, direction of M. de Maurepas. This minister, smaller in mind than he was in body (though he was a dwarf), possessed no faculty in his soul but that of *perception*; he would have made a savant of the first order, a critic (but without sagacity and without wit), if he had kept himself to the study of letters. He could render with much clearness, although he stuttered, the ideas of others, but he had none of his own. Never was there a mind more sterile or a storehouse of memory so full of little particulars of all kinds. His mind was literally a vacant space into which ideas were put without taking root or germinating; plagiarist and echo, it was a pleasure to hear him repeat, word for word, as if from his own store, what others had put into him some days earlier; and the same thing was always said by him in the same way, unless some new succour had reached him. Such a man was easy to govern; M. de Maurepas had, with much cleverness, brought the cardinal

to accept him; his protector was therefore his oracle; every decision, every despatch, every plan emanated from that oracle; a secret door had been made in the partition wall between their cabinets, and through it they consulted; the guidance thus obtained was as capricious and volatile as the mind of the man who gave it.

No principles, no consistency had regulated our French negotiations since the dismissal of M. Chauvelin. Cardinal de Fleury, adding decrepitude to mediocrity, had formed what we call "committees," at which the ministers assembled, often in his Eminence's cabinet. The ordinary affairs of their departments were then and there dealt with under the eyes of the old minister, who said not a word and let things alone. Foreign affairs, as being the most important, took the first place, but the secretary of State of that department did little more than the functions of a clerk. To resist the influence of a clamorous crowd, strong lungs are needed, an imposing gesture, an air of importance and boldness, even more than reason and experience. M. Amelot could seldom have carried the day in these committees; nor could you, monseigneur.¹

The death of the cardinal gave the Maréchal de Noailles entrance to the Council; there he made use of Mme. de Châteauroux and M. de Richelieu, who were influenced by his hypocrisy, but soon repented themselves. He stunned the committee by the noise and petulance of his speeches; he hesitated at nothing, and changed his system weekly. He meddled with everything, in the civil as well as the military government; he stormed in the committees and in the Coun-

¹ This account of the Marquis d'Argenson's ministry is supposed to be written by the fictitious secretary already mentioned, — doubtless to enable the former to speak more freely of himself; but the effect is clumsy and irritating. — Tr.

cil; he introduced a variation of principles and measures daily, and a pusillanimity of methods which hardly existed under Henri III. Poor M. Amelot was unable to say a word; all was done without him, thus destroying the little merit he still had in the eyes of his master, before whom he became more timid than ever. He foresaw his coming dismissal, and M. de Maurepas, as the only remedy for that danger, prescribed to him humble compliance. Creator and creature lost their heads in the tumult.

M. de Rothembourg [lieutenant-general, and trusted friend of Frederick the Great] arrived from Berlin to negotiate secretly a new alliance with the King of Prussia. He conferred in private with Mme. de Châteauroux and M. de Richelieu. The latter's principal ardour at the moment was to get M. de Maurepas dismissed; he said that, at any rate, it was "putting out one of his eyes" to drive out M. Amelot, and he got M. de Rothembourg to demand it on behalf of the King of Prussia as a condition of the treaty (dangerous concession in politics); M. Amelot was accordingly dismissed two days before the departure of the king for the army.

M. de Richelieu aimed for the chief ministry; he believed he had cleared his way there by placing the Maréchal de Noailles in the Council, and, with the class-spirit of a great seigneur he intended to begin by annihilating the influence of the secretaries of State. He had conceived a great respect for the Sieur Du Theil, one of the clerks at the ministry of Foreign Affairs, but he was not long in perceiving that this old clerk was worth very little. The king often told you that he had never known such a dull man; and yet his Majesty was induced to have no other secretary of State for Foreign Affairs than he (though without the title) during the seven months of the campaign of 1744.

Thus nothing was done, nothing was despatched during that time; the ministers of foreign countries did not know whom to address; our ministers received despatches of four lines only, dry and ungracious, such as clerks might draw up if allowed to do so. The Maréchal bawled in the Council as usual, and did nothing; Chavigny and San-Sevérin governed him, and inspired him with the little he did do. The first seized upon the negotiation of Frankfort; he stipulated for the House of Bavaria advantages which would redound to his own credit, for he expected to be made secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the king's return to Paris. As for M. de San-Sevérin, he wanted another appointment as ambassador for the wealth and honours he could get out of it. The Maréchal de Noailles had inspired the king with the highest opinion of that wicked Italian, and a post for him had to be found. Just at this moment the Comte de Bruhl made some complaints of M. Desalleurs, envoy of France to Saxony and Poland: they seized the opportunity to recall him, without any consideration for the minister or the ministry; the business suffered much. The clerk M. Desalleurs left in Dresden saw nothing, did nothing, and sent no information to France of what was happening. Everything at that Court was turning against us and in favour of our enemies; the Austrians and the English seized this moment to win over the Saxons completely, and they signed, January 8, 1745, the treaty of Warsaw, to which we may principally attribute the refusal of the empire on the part of the King of Poland, and the election of the Grand-duke [of Tuscany] to that high dignity. M. de San-Sevérin arrived just in time to see that treaty signed under his nose; he has since been largely suspected of doing his best to serve the Queen of Hungary.

At this very time occurred the disgrace of M. de la Chétar-

die in Russia; he was arrested as a criminal, his papers seized, the Russian orders and all the presents with which the Czarina had loaded him taken from him. France, under very bad advice, received this affront gently and civilly; and they sent in his place the Sieur Daillon, formerly his secretary, for no other reason than because, having had a notorious quarrel with M. de la Chétardie, he was supposed to be agreeable to Chancellor Bestuchef, who at that time governed Russia.

At Cologne, our envoy, the Comte de Sade, had quarrelled with the Elector and his minister, having previously been high in their good graces; but he abused them; the Elector complained that the envoy had sold his favour for money, and had done several other base things of self-interest. M. de Sade asked permission to make a journey in France, which was granted without due attention being paid to the matter. He took final leave of the Elector and received his present, but carefully concealed this ceremony, so that his salary might be continued. He was represented at Bonn by a man named Beaumez, his secretary, one of the vilest creatures that were ever mixed up in our affairs; a man who was sold to all who would give him money, and who ended by notorious rascalities which brought him to die in prison. Nevertheless, we never had greater need of influence at the Court of Cologne than at this time; but, our embassy being thus rendered vacant, the English made a treaty of subsidy with the Elector, by which he proved himself the greatest enemy of the Emperor, his brother; and he would have lent all the troops that could be raised in his States, and have voted against him in the Diets, if you, monseigneur, had not promptly interfered.

The foregoing is a specimen of the management of Foreign Affairs during the seven months that preceded your ministry.

The Prussian General Schmettau was sent to be near the king while he was ill at Metz; this was for the purpose of observing and counteracting, on the part of the King of Prussia, our military operations. Never was there better seen than on this occasion the effects of our levity and our sense of need, in the degrees of consideration and of contempt that were shown to this general during the six months that his mission lasted; for the first three months he might have been the King of Prussia himself, but after his master had evacuated Bohemia he was treated as little else than a lawyer's clerk. The Queen of Hungary intercepted some of his despatches, in which he told very bad things of the gentlemen of the Council; and this brought down upon him all the partisans of the ministry; that is to say, those who were seeking their fortunes and feared the dismissal of the ministers. The Council took no heed of the fact that we had long been under a necessity to treat with caution the King of Prussia, that he still might turn against us for the rest of this war and in that way consolidate his conquests the better, reserving the power to take back our alliance when peace was made, because the sentiments of princes are at the bidding of their interests. We followed in this our passions of levity, dazzled by our first successes, and weighing little our true interests. The King of Prussia had a treaty with us (of June, 1744) to conquer and despoil the Queen of Hungary; by that treaty we were to keep a part of the conquests we expected to make in the Low Countries. But the King of Prussia, having been driven out of Bohemia at the point of the bayonet, wrote a letter to the king to which was joined a very fine memorial, in which he confessed his mistakes, declared that he meant to correct himself of deviating from his line [*faire des pointes*]; and, in truth, he did so correct himself. He advised us to do the

same, to work for peace at once, on the footing where affairs then were, and to renounce all desire for further conquests, and to keep none. Thus he released us from the article in the treaty of June which stipulated for them, renouncing them also for himself, being content with Silesia which he promised to defend, and which he has defended.

The King of Denmark was in a very doubtful state of mind in regard to us, and our enemies were openly counting twelve hundred Danish cavalry among their troops for the coming campaign.

Sweden groaned, so did Poland, under the tyranny of Russia. Our partisans in Sweden and Poland were seeking only to draw all the money they could from us, on the pretext of being offered a higher price by the English; but their purpose was solely to feed their luxury and do nothing decisive.

The Dutch entered this war reluctantly; necessity alone led them to support the House of Austria lest France and Spain, united in one House, might possibly, if on good terms, become too powerful and threaten their liberty, their commerce, and their religion; at least, this is what their leaders, corrupted by England, preached to their people, already excited against us by their passions. Since the establishment of their barrier of the Low Countries, the body of the republic earnestly desires peace; but England continues her machinations in the State assembly, and we serve her marvellously in her designs by our imprudence.

England is no less weary of the war. The Council and the whole Britannic Court united to drive from the ministry John Carteret, Earl Granville, a great fire-eater, the implacable enemy of the House of France through the principles he has formed for himself. This took place in December, 1744; nothing seemed more likely to put us on the road to peace; to reach it, it was necessary not to further irritate

the maritime powers — we did just the contrary by an attack on the Low Countries. We shall never obtain peace by means of injuries and insults. In view of our marked successes in the war, we have now only to stretch out our arms, and relax in a few demands, to gain what we wish, provided we show justice and sincerity; but it will be otherwise when we seem to defy all Europe at the close of an unjust war. You proposed, therefore, to the king, as the true means of peace, *a thorough and foreseeing defensive on all sides* during this campaign; a vigorous resistance which would make our worst enemies lose all desire to attack us, and cause the triumph of pacific opinions in Courts where those opinions are daily gaining more and more influence.

Such was your plan on taking the helm of Foreign Affairs; and you have never followed any other, accommodating that plan to the different events as they occurred. Cardinal de Fleury would have seconded you well in this, if you had been employed in his day; and you regret him for this reason, although you were on very bad terms with him during the last years of his life. Since his death, the voices that prevail in the Council are much changed by self-interest and influence; they talk of peace, but all their determinations are for war. During the whole period of the cardinal's rule arms were subordinate to politics, but since the king governs, they say, for himself, his Majesty listens willingly only to those who have an interest in promoting war. The king, young, and more venturesome than people think, places his honour in not desisting from anything that he has once undertaken; he often says in council, "Whoso risks nothing has nothing;" he respects the courage of those who tell him that the "shortest follies are the best;" he is bored by arguments; he likes brief sophistries disguised in terms of wisdom and honour.

You often met in Paris M. de Torcy, former minister of the late king; his Majesty permitted you to confide to him the most secret affairs of State and to consult him upon them as you thought proper. When you quoted him to the king his opinion had much weight, his Majesty liking nothing so much as to follow the spirit and the usages of Louis XIV. M. de Torcy often told you that he attributed the faults and disasters that happened in his day principally to the little influence allowed to the ministry of Foreign Affairs during that reign. The other departments were always more listened to than his. First, M. de Louvois for war, then the department of building, and lastly the Jesuits, who stirred to piety and took as a means the entire expulsion of Jansenists and Calvinists,—these three interests carried the day with Louis XIV., and all else yielded to them. That prince never liked to enter tête à tête on political arguments; personal work with the minister was therefore much abridged; the plans and ideas of the minister on such topics were sent to the Council, where the other ministers carried matters as they chose against him, and he could only obey.

You once proposed to the king to call M. de Torcy to the Council, as a personage highly considered by foreigners and whose very name would give influence to your views; but his Majesty replied with the old prejudice inspired into his mind in youth, namely, that "he was the brother of the leader of Jansenism (the Bishop of Montpellier), and that he was a little inclined to it himself."

Your plan of reaching in this way a prompt conclusion, and the only one you followed, was based on the following reasoning: We wished to ruin the House of Austria; we have not profited by the time when that house was off its guard against our forces; we were repulsed, and driven home; Europe now pretends to break in upon us and put us out of

condition to attempt new enterprises. Our first designs resembled those of Cardinal de Richelieu in the Thirty Years War, ended by the peace of Westphalia; our present situation may resemble that of 1704 after our first defeats at Hochstedt and Ramillies, with this difference, that our government is worse than that of the late king. All Europe conspiring against us may lead us far in the long run; for let us take things at their worst so as not to deceive ourselves. Let peace, then, such as we can now make it, be our principal object; we can indubitably bring it about by defending ourselves properly and undertaking no new offensive war. Let us increase our forces and diminish our insults; let us make our enemies recognize that we are formidable in defence, just and wise in attack. They desire tranquillity themselves; let them see a prospect of it, let their peoples see the evils of such expense, and we shall soon reach what is called the *fin de guerre lasse* — peace for peace' sake. Let us keep what we have won; we have conquered enough to make very honourable terms at a general peace.

It is by viewing things at their worst that we reach our ends safely; certainly a speedy peace would have been secured to us at the beginning of your ministry if your advice had been followed wholly. I say wholly, for it is a case of the maxim, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quorumque defectu*. The farther we advance in ill-concerted and badly executed enterprises, and the more we experience of the evil on one side and feel the good of the other, the more your principles will be verified as sound and indubitable. You carried the day in the Council of the following year for conducting the war on these principles in Germany, doing no harm, making no threats against the Empire; consequently none were made against France; and this, to the great astonishment of everybody, resulted (without

treaty) in complete neutrality; it lasted, and continued to grow stronger in your time, in spite of the anger of the Court of Vienna.

At the first Council of State at which you were present the king made his ministers a speech on the authority he confided to you; he declared that henceforth the ministers of foreign countries would confer with you alone, and that the past system would no longer be allowed. Truly the utmost confidence was thus shown to you in the discharge of your duty; but it is to be desired that it had extended to your intercourse with the other ministers, because of the connection they have with your ministry.

For example: shortly after your first steps towards peace were taken (according to the principles I have just expressed) you heard talk of the bankruptcy which M. Orry, controller-general, was about to compel our Company of the Indies to make; you went at once to the king to represent the injury this would do to the reputation of our powers abroad; you presented a method of suspension only; you were listened to by the king, you seemed to have convinced him; M. Orry was immediately sent for, and he destroyed in the end all you had begun.

During the two campaigns you made with the king, you and your brother, the Comte d'Argenson, each played literally the rôle of prime-minister; on the first campaign Maréchal de Noailles made a third; but on the second, he being in Spain, you two brothers alone formed the whole Council of the king. The chancellor addressed himself in preference to you when he needed to ask decisions from the king or explanations on points not made sufficiently clear in the marginal notes to his documents made by his Majesty's own hand; you have many letters from this magistrate for the present Correspondence.

You began by coming to a clear understanding with the king on two things which were truly at the foundation of your labours: first, whether it was true, as so many of the courtiers had assured you, that the king had a passionate predilection for Spain which threatened with disgrace and dismissal whoever told him the truth and served the State well by opposing the Court of Madrid. As to this, his Majesty assured you he was incapable of such infatuation; that he knew how irrational the Queen of Spain was, and in what degree Spain might be useful or inconvenient to us. His Majesty added that he had signed the treaty of Fontainebleau in 1743 against his will, for it bound us to impossible conquests in favour of Spain; but, to persuade him, they kept repeating to him the assurance that he would otherwise be left without allies during the war, and that, Spain being the only one he could acquire, it was necessary to do so at any cost.

You then assured the king that so long as Philip V. reigned and his wife governed it was impossible to conclude a general peace with Europe, — because in the Spanish Court means were never proportioned to the end; that they thought only of their own interests, coarsely, harshly, without the slightest regard to those of others; and that all was conducted by passions of pride, cupidity, and revenge; consequently that we must resolve to treat of peace secretly without this ally; and having made the best terms we could, with pure intentions such as his Majesty brought into all things, Spain must not be informed of the conditions until they were positively secured, no matter what she might say and do.

On the second point you asked his Majesty *if he really wished for peace now*, and with what degree of impatience. You proposed to him to reflect upon this question further,

and to write to you a species of instruction which would serve you as guide in the future, that you might not lose any occasion for putting his wishes into execution. It may be said that none of his ministers ever made greater progress with him than you; foreigners observed it at the time. When M. de Champeaux returned from Turin at the close of 1745 to render an account of his negotiation he had a conference of an hour and a half with the king at Choisy, and he was extremely surprised to find that he could talk of his affairs with all the intelligence, shrewdness, and active interest of a prime-minister. The said Champeaux observed that you put a most happy and innocent art into this, presenting at the right moment points for discussion, beginning the discussion yourself, then retiring, as it were, to make the prince think and say what he had in his heart. His mind is naturally good and just; he needs only to have it set in motion, and for those who address him to refrain from all flattery and censure; it was a true passion with you to bring out the good qualities of the king in all things, to make the work turn on him, and to give to him the whole honour of it. Cardinal de Fleury was accused of doing just the contrary. As for the other ministers in your time, they sought, visibly, to increase his foibles in order to profit by them.

The first letter the king wrote to you on his ideas for peace was as follows:—

“December 23, 1744.

“I send you my ultimatum as to peace. Let us not say we wish peace, but let us wish it as the greatest good, provided it can last long. Let us await what is said to us, and let us negotiate nothing on this subject at present with our allies. The King of Prussia wants nothing new for himself; as for the two others, they will have to come in the end to

what we think best for them. If we are valued to-day, it is because we are feared. Let us not seem to desire anything but the *most vigorous war*; nothing but that can ever bring about the *peace which I desire as much, and more, than all others.*"

On a separate slip of paper was written:—

"Below is my ultimatum; but I desire that all shall come from others. To listen and say nothing is my will.

"1st. That the Emperor be emperor without confirmation, having no need of it, but only of a simple recognition by the Queen of Hungary, the only power who has not yet recognized him.

"2d. His complete re-establishment in Bavaria.

"3d. Recognition for him and his descendants from the anterior Austria.

"4th. Cession to the Infant Don Philip of Savoie and the county of Nice by the King of Sardinia as indemnity for the Milanese provinces; Finale to remain to the Genoese.

"5th. Restitution by France of the fortified places in Flanders, on condition that she be allowed to do what she may judge best for the security of Dunkerque.

"6th. France and Spain being contented with the above terms, it is just that England should enjoy the right of privateering, and that the treaty of Assiento be renewed with her; and I hold myself willing to be the mediator on their other differences."

We must observe here, on the predilection of the king for Spain, that his Majesty, like all other men, can often be shaken by the ideas of others that are contrary to his own and against the knowledge of experience. A score of secret influences surrounding him at hours when he is least on his guard make more impression than a minister can destroy

in a serious conference which he has with his Majesty perhaps once a week. His daughter, the Infanta of Spain, writes to him regularly very long letters, and the king answers in the same way. The Maréchal de Noailles and M. de Maurepas are devoted to the system of blind obedience to Spain. The Spanish ambassador, Campo-Florido, often has long conversations with the king, without the intervention of the minister of Foreign Affairs (which never happened in the days of the late king); he is even admitted into the king's familiarity; and if all this was not absolutely enough to make the king do whatever the Court of Spain desired, it certainly lessened the consistency and firmness of conduct that were requisite in such delicate conjunctures.

As to the desire for peace which the king so fully indicates in the letter just copied, it is to be observed that ideas of glory may often be mistaken if they are not corrected. A prince born with the prerogative to command obedience cannot weigh things as the subaltern who is charged with their execution must do. In this "ultimatum" there are many things which were inspired in the king by the minister of War during the campaign of 1744, at a time when that ministry could not be opposed by that of Foreign Affairs; it is as if the police dictated to the courts their sentences, whereas they are only appointed to execute them. The king saw himself at that moment a conqueror on all sides; he thought he had an invincible general in the Comte de Saxe; they represented to him the conquest of the Catholic Low Countries as an inexhaustible source of advantages for a general peace.

Though the king really thought he was making a great effort for moderation in dictating the conditions we have now read, some of them were impossible, — such as the one he repeats several times: to say nothing and leave to the

enemies or the mediators the burden of proposing terms. The nations of Europe, it must be said, pique themselves on the craft they employ on us, because we are reputed to be more crafty than we are. They always wanted, therefore, just the contrary of what the king urged on this occasion; they wanted that we should speak first, and they would rather have let themselves be injured than yield on that rule.

If the king was really inspired with a desire for peace, as he wrote, he was still more so with a desire for glory, as we may see in the words of his letter, "a vigorous war." He wanted to get away from Versailles; he had just lost the Duchesse de Châteauroux and felt a great need of distraction; thus all things worked to give great advantages to the war department. Wise men had warned you, monseigneur, not to oppose his will too much at this crisis; whose displeases is always thought in the wrong.

Nevertheless, you did not refrain from giving the king a few days later a memorial in which you entreated him to make serious reflections; but it had no success in convincing him. It was based on the principles already mentioned. You proposed a *simple defensive* in Flanders, partly from fear of increasing a dangerous storm in that direction, partly to be able to turn with greater advantage to the other theatres of war, Germany and Italy (these containing our principal objects), where, far from being able to master them, our defensive even was not secure. The Queen of Hungary had sent all her principal troops into Germany, leaving the defence of the Low Countries to the maritime powers. In Italy we ought to have been superior to the Spaniards in order to guide them, but we were just the contrary. What we needed was a solid defensive on all sides; maintaining firmly the conquests made by us or by our allies over the

Queen of Hungary, in a manner that should make our enemies despair of regaining them. A part of these conquests we should have kept; the rest would have served as the price of peace, when the enemy wearied of a useless war.

We had not then lost Louisburg in America; therefore we were intact on all sides. The King of Prussia had conquered Silesia; we were to help in its preservation by the nearest diversion. The king had taken Menin, Ypres, Courtray, and Furnes in Flanders, and Fribourg in Germany; an emperor had been elected by the strength of our power in the empire; we held anterior Austria in the Suabian circle, which we destined for the Emperor. The latter occupied Bavaria as far as Passau, but that position was hazardous and even regarded as certain to be lost if we did not support it by a better disposition of our forces. We needed Ingolstadt and magazines; the army of the Maréchal de Maillebois occupied Franconia and the electoral circle; but he had to be supported either to save him from recrossing the Rhine, or to make a diversion to the attack of Bavaria. On the Italian side we held Savoie; the Spaniards had a good army there under the orders of Comte de Gages, a general of reputation; a French army, inferior in numbers, was on the point of joining it, through facilities we had just obtained by our treaty with the Genoese. We might have looked for fortunate conquests there, provided . . . [name of some general omitted in the manuscript, probably Maréchal de Maillebois or the Prince de Conti] conducted them solidly and in a manner, as our old warriors used to say, "not to advance the left foot until the right is firmly planted." The Queen of Hungary having but few troops in Italy, the principal defence fell on the King of Sardinia.

Nothing would then have been easier in negotiating for peace than to have obtained recognition everywhere for the

The king, however, was so obsessed and prejudiced that these suggestions, often repeated, wearied him and did not make even the beginning of an impression. You believed that you might say openly a part of what you thought on the means of obtaining peace, speaking only of justice and of the general repose which the king desired for all Europe; you said this often to the foreign ministers. Yes, France desires peace, with passion even; if it is refused, our enemies will see that we know how to make war, but only on the refusal of peace. It seemed to you that your country played the nobler rôle in this resolve. Results confirmed your opinion; at Court you were called "M. d'Argenson of peace;" and your brother, "M. d'Argenson of war;" the king himself distinguished you by these two names; and you took great pleasure in yours.

All that has happened has justified your system, however little attention was given to it at the time; although at the date when this is written (1747) we do not know what will be the final upshot. The Maréchal de Saxe besieged Tournay at the end of the following April with an army inferior to that of the enemy and without an army of observation: our able warriors of the Council and the Court assured us that the enemy would not be ready so soon, and that they could not succour Tournay; nevertheless, the king had scarcely time to reach his camp from Douai before the battle began. I leave history to tell how near it came to being lost; *it was lost for two hours*, and the kingdom was within a hair's-breadth of its ruin. The Maréchal de Saxe has talents and capacity, but luck surpassed his prudence, and zeal for the new country he serves does not always inspire his plans. He could easily have pursued the enemy after Fontenoy; he could have accomplished during the campaign of 1745 all that he did in the following one, or even in that of 1747. The battle of

of France, the results of this coronation among the Germanic powers, the re-taking of Silesia, our expulsion from Germany, all these were considered by the Court of Vienna as events certain to happen.

We left them a free course, instead of interfering with them; the Maréchal de Maillebois was sent to Italy, and in his place they substituted the Prince de Conti, who did nothing of value and only showed extreme prudence where temerity was needed. They withdrew twenty thousand men from his army, whereas they ought to have reinforced it and turned all our efforts on the Rhine; but this was done to procure for the king a glorious campaign in Flanders; behold what flattery produces in the council of kings!

When you proposed the defensive in Flanders, the proposal was very ill-received; his Majesty told you that you did not understand war, which was very true; that a defensive was ruinous and dangerous; that we ate up our own country instead of living on that of the enemy by an offensive war; that we could then only attack the Queen of Hungary directly through the Low Countries; that we should frighten the maritime powers, etc. To this you replied: "But why frighten them? Let us cease to insult, let us lessen fears, and we shall gain peace. We shall plead (as they say in law) with *mains garnies*. Let us keep what we have; we shall tire out the enemy; he has no hope of doing us damage except through our new enterprises; *they* will put all to risk" (in point of fact the battle of Fontenoy, fought a few months later, came very near being fatal to us). "Instead of which, a defensive war, carried on by a great power like us, risks nothing, assures all; the late king had recourse to it after the defeats of Ramillies and Malplaquet, and obtained great advantages; how much more shall we, who hold the superiority and offer peace."

The king, however, was so obsessed and prejudiced that these suggestions, often repeated, wearied him and did not make even the beginning of an impression. You believed that you might say openly a part of what you thought on the means of obtaining peace, speaking only of justice and of the general repose which the king desired for all Europe; you said this often to the foreign ministers. Yes, France desires peace, with passion even; if it is refused, our enemies will see that we know how to make war, but only on the refusal of peace. It seemed to you that your country played the nobler rôle in this resolve. Results confirmed your opinion; at Court you were called "M. d'Argenson of peace;" and your brother, "M. d'Argenson of war;" the king himself distinguished you by these two names; and you took great pleasure in yours.

All that has happened has justified your system, however little attention was given to it at the time; although at the date when this is written (1747) we do not know what will be the final upshot. The Maréchal de Saxe besieged Tournay at the end of the following April with an army inferior to that of the enemy and without an army of observation: our able warriors of the Council and the Court assured us that the enemy would not be ready so soon, and that they could not succour Tournay; nevertheless, the king had scarcely time to reach his camp from Douai before the battle began. I leave history to tell how near it came to being lost; *it was lost for two hours*, and the kingdom was within a hair's-breadth of its ruin. The Maréchal de Saxe has talents and capacity, but luck surpassed his prudence, and zeal for the new country he serves does not always inspire his plans. He could easily have pursued the enemy after Fontenoy; he could have accomplished during the campaign of 1745 all that he did in the following one, or even in that of 1747. The battle of

Mesle in June, 1745, was given by his soldiers and was purely the result of chance. Without that luck the Ghent enterprise would have failed and our conquests would have been much upset. All these marvellous, multiplied, and unexpected circumstances were needed to justify the system of "frightening our enemies by the rapidity of our conquests in Flanders." We did not even employ celerity. After Fontenoy we piqued ourselves on great prudence on this field of the war; all the while abandoning imprudently the other fields, so that taking the total of the war we had more disadvantages on one side than advantages on the other. It is these unfortunate set-offs that are calculated to, and will, decide the peace; it was quite otherwise in the wars which preceded the peace of Westphalia and those of Nimeguen and Ryswick.

During this conquest of Flanders the minister of war persuaded the king to dismantle several of the conquered forts, which destroyed the barricade of the United-Provinces, so that whenever we form a new enterprise on the Low-Countries we can march straight into Holland over a vast plain almost without obstacle. It is a great question whether that barrier was not more useful to us, by facilitating a neutrality with the republic of Holland, than necessary to the same republic, which is not at heart our enemy (being so only by misunderstandings), and which we ought to protect, for it has everything to fear from England in regard to its commerce, and from the House of Austria in regard to its liberty. Another great question: would this increase of terror inspired by France add to her power and her happiness? It is the War department which counsels these views without consulting that of politics. Such counsels are dangerous; we saw this well enough during the ministry of M. de Louvois. Our intendants, clerks, and military purveyors

have made their profit out of these rich conquered countries while they were in our possession; they rendered scarcely any accounts; they have enriched themselves, under pretext of laying up subsistence for our troops in winter. They have sent a dagger to the heart of those good Flemings whom the late king, on the contrary, spared and considered on a like occasion. They have intimidated the Dutch, they have irritated Europe, and they have given much to say to the negotiators on the enemy's side, who thwart the peace that you evoked by reason and justice on all sides.

By this system, France abandoned the affairs of Germany at the very moment that her support was most deserved. Shortly after the battle of Fontenoy, they obtained (without a word to you) twenty thousand men from the army of the Prince de Conti, which forced the latter to recross the Rhine and leave free course to the election of the Grand-duke as emperor.

The new Elector of Bavaria, receiving very insufficient assistance from us, was driven out and made his treaty of Fuessen, which gave him to our enemies. By that, also, the King of Prussia, abandoned to his own forces, and receiving no diversion from our war in Flanders (which occupied only the maritime powers, and not those of Germany), came four times very near to being destroyed, and owed his safety only to his luck and his activity. He loaded us with reproaches, and made peace without us, through the mediation of England.

Our government, economizing all the French troops in order to concentrate them in Flanders, refused to send any into Italy. It was necessary, however, either to abandon the Spaniards, or to carry out the great designs we had bound ourselves to undertake with them. The private peace of the King of Prussia having enabled the Queen of Hungary to

reinforce her army in Italy, the two crowns of France and Spain were entirely driven out the following year, and the Genoese territory conquered by the implacable enemy we had drawn down upon it.

Such were the products of the offensive war in the Low-Countries, against which you had said so much ; a vain glory, without solidity ; advantages composed of a hundred defeats on other sides ; a work of flattery and cupidity. You have a hundred times had reason to note the truth of what M. de Torcy said to you, namely : the ministry that you filled, that of Foreign Affairs, was *a head without arms and without force* ; it is that of stern but impotent reason, which is opposed to all, but can surmount nothing. To persuade, we must please ; and to please princes, we must flatter, not by words, but by things which directly gratify their passions ; foresight, justice, a distant good are not among the number of those direct things that appeal to their vanity or their fears. We can reason with our master. Louis XV. listens with amiable patience ; but that patience does not mean the sentiment of a victorious persuasion. Let no one deceive himself : the king is even more absolute than Louis XIV. ; he commands more by keeping silence than other masters by speaking loudly ; his silence means injunction not to continue, prohibition to insist. A wise minister will not forget for a moment his subjection.

[*The Battle of Fontenoy : Letter of the Marquis d'Argenson to Voltaire.*¹]

" May 15, 1745.

" *Monsieur l'historien*, you must have heard by Wednesday evening the news about which you send me so many con-

¹ The famous letter of the Marquis d'Argenson on the battle of Fontenoy to his school-comrade and friend Voltaire, and published by the latter, was apparently not among his papers ; but the rough draft, or germ, of it was found, together with Voltaire's reply, as they are given above. — *T.*

gratulations. A page started from the battlefield on Tuesday at half-past two o'clock to take the letters; I learn that he arrived at Versailles Wednesday at five o'clock. It was a fine spectacle to see the king and the dauphin writing on a drum, surrounded by victors and vanquished, dead, dying, and prisoners. Here are some incidents that I observed.

"I had the honour of meeting the king on Sunday close to the battlefield. I arrived from Paris at the Chin headquarters. I was told that the king was out riding; I asked for a horse and joined his Majesty close to the spot from which could be seen the enemy's camp. I learned then from his Majesty, for the first time, what was intended to take place immediately. Never did I see a man so gay at the thought of an adventure as the master. We discussed the very point you refer to in your four lines: which of our kings had won the greatest royal battles? I assure you that the courage did not wrong the judgment, nor the judgment the memory. From there, we all went to sleep on straw. Never was a ball-night so gay; never so many witty sayings! We slept all the time that was not interrupted by couriers, *grassins* [soldiers of Grassins' regiment], and aides de camp. The king sang a song with many couplets, which is very droll. As for the dauphin he went to battle as if to a hunt, and seemed to be saying, 'What! is this all it is?' A cannon-ball ploughed up the mud and spattered a man who was close to the king. Our masters laughed heartily at the daubing. One of my brother's grooms was wounded in the head by a musket-ball; this man was behind the company.

"The true, the certain, the non-flattering is that it is the king himself who won the battle by his will, by his firmness. You will have the tale and the details; you will know that

there was a terrible hour, in which we saw the second volume of Dettingen, our Frenchmen humbled before that British firmness whose rolling fire resembled hell, and, I own, dumfounded inactive spectators. Then we despaired of the republic. Some of our generals, who have more courage of heart than of mind, gave very prudent counsels; they sent orders to Lille, they doubled the guard around the king, and they made ready to send him off; but the king only laughed at them all; he rode from the left to the centre and called for the reserves and the brave Löwendahl; but there was no need of them. Another reserve charged. It was the same cavalry which had charged in the beginning uselessly,—the king's household troops, the carbineers, those of the French guards who had remained stationery, and the Irish, excellent above all when they march against the English and Hanoverians. Your friend M. de Richelieu is a true Bayard. It was he who gave the advice, and executed it, of advancing on the enemy like hunters, or like foragers, pell-mell, hands low, arms shortened, masters, valets, officers, cavalry, infantry, all together. This French vivacity, of which so much is said, nothing resisted; it was an affair of ten minutes to win the battle with that thrust. The big English battalions turned their backs to it, and, to tell it briefly, we killed fourteen thousand. It is true that the cannon have the honour of that horrible butchery. Never have so many cannon and such heavy ones been fired in a general battle as at Fontenoy. There were one hundred, monsieur. It seems that these poor enemies had allowed all sorts of things most injurious for them to be brought up,—cannon from Douai, gendarmerie, mousquetaires.

“At this last charge of which I was telling you, one incident must not be forgotten: Monseigneur the dauphin, from a natural impulse, took sword in hand with the prettiest

grace in the world, and wanted to charge; they begged him to do no such thing. After that (to tell you the evil as well the good) I remarked a habit, too quickly acquired, of seeing tranquilly on a battlefield the naked dead, enemies in their death-throes, smoking wounds. For myself, I own my heart failed me and I needed a flask. I observed our young heroes well; I found them too indifferent in this respect; I fear, as the result of such a life, that a taste will develop for this inhuman butchery.

"Triumph is the finest thing in the world; the *Vive le Roi!* the hats in the air on the points of the bayonets, the compliments of the master to his warriors, the visit to the intrenchments, the redoubts, the village all intact, the joy, the glory, the tenderness!— But the ground of all this is **human blood and fragments of human flesh.**

"At the close of the triumph the king honoured me with a conversation on peace. I despatched the couriers. The king amused himself much in the trenches yesterday; he was often fired at; he stayed there three hours. I worked in my cabinet, which is my trench; for I own that I withdraw to my routine from all these dissipations. I tremble at the volleys that I hear. But I went yesterday to see the trenches in my own little private way. They are not very interesting by day. This morning we are to have a *Te Deum* in a tent, with a general salvo from the army, which the king is to view from Mount Trinity. It will be fine."

[*Reply of Voltaire.*]

"May 20, 1745.

"You have written, Monseigneur, a letter such as Mme. de Sévigné would have written had she been on a field of battle. I have just given battle also, and I have had more trouble in singing the victory than the king had in winning it.

M. Bayard de Richelieu will tell you the rest. You will see that the name of Argenson has not been forgotten. [Allusion to his 'Poëme de Fontenoy.'] In truth you have rendered that name very dear to me ; the two brothers are rendering it glorious. Adieu, monsieur ; I have a fever as the result of having sounded the trumpet. I adore you."

1. The first step is to identify the problem. 2. The second step is to define the problem. 3. The third step is to analyze the problem. 4. The fourth step is to develop a solution. 5. The fifth step is to implement the solution. 6. The sixth step is to evaluate the solution. 7. The seventh step is to monitor the solution. 8. The eighth step is to maintain the solution. 9. The ninth step is to improve the solution. 10. The tenth step is to document the solution.

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APPENDIX.

PROJECTED MEMOIRS OF MINISTRY BEGINNING AT THE END
OF 1744, AND ENDING AT THE BEGINNING OF 1747, IN
FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

Preface and plan of the work. Art. 1. Maxims of the ministry of Foreign Affairs. Art. 2. Characters of the principal personages. Art. 3. Tableau of general affairs in November, 1744. Art. 4. First measures taken by this ministry. Art. 5. Jubilee of April, 1745. Art. 6. Interests of France with Spain at the close of the reign of Philip V. Art. 7. How the declaration of a general peace became difficult after France declared war against England and the Queen of Hungary. Art. 8. Affairs of Scotland. Enterprises of Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Useless attempts for reconciliation with England. Art. 9. Affairs with the Republic of the United Provinces. Art. 10. State of our affairs with Bavaria. Federal Union of Frankfort. Death of the Emperor Charles VII. Treaty of Fuessen. Art. 11. Affairs of Prussia. Her alliances with France. Difficulty of preserving them. Art. 12. Affairs with the Elector Palatine, with the Elector of Cologne and the Governor of Hesse.

VOLUME II.

Art. 1. Affairs with the Empire in general. Election of the Grand-duke of Tuscany to the Empire of Germany. Art. 2. Affairs with the Court of Saxony and with Poland. Art. 3. Affairs with Sweden. Art. 4. Affairs with Denmark, renewal of

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VOLUME III.

Art. 1. Negotiations of Champenoux at Turin, Articles signed. Art. 2. Affairs of Spain till the death of Philip V. and our first Dauphine. Embassy of Maréchal de Noailles to Madrid. Art. 3. Continuation of the affairs of England and Scotland. Art. 4. Negotiations for a general peace. Conference at Dresden. Art. 5. Conduct of France with the King of Prussia after the private peace signed at Hanover and Dresden. Art. 6. Continuation of the affairs of Bavaria from the treaty of Poesen to February, 1747. Means proposed to re-establish the electorate. Art. 7. Continuation of affairs with the Elector-Palatine. Affair of Seltz. Art. 8. Affairs with Cologne, Liège, and Wurtemberg. Art. 9. Neutrality of the empire. Art. 10. Continuation of affairs with Sweden. General Diet. Negotiation for a treaty of subsidies. Art. 11. Affairs with Denmark. Observations on our treaty with the new King of Denmark. Art. 12. Continuation of affairs with Russia. Art. 13. Continuation of affairs with Genoa.

VOLUME IV.

Art. 1. Affairs with the Duke of Modena. Art. 2. Continuation of affairs with Rome, Venice, Malta, and Switzerland. Art. 3. Court of Naples, change of prime-minister. Art. 4. Affairs with the Court of Spain after the death of Philip V. Art. 5. Affairs with Portugal. Negotiations of the Court of Spain at Lisbon for a private peace with England. Art. 6. Diet of Poland. Court of Dresden. Art. 7. Second marriage of the dauphin with the Princess of Saxony. Art. 8. Continuation of affairs with the Ottoman Porte. Art. 9. Retirement of the Marquis d'Argenson. Chronology of the principal political and military acts during his

ministry. Incidents of the Eight Years' War, drawn from the negotiations of Sweden and Prussia.

These manuscript Memoirs, the greater part of which are in the form of mere Notes, with verifying documents inserted here and there among them, bear the number 57 in the Collection of the Marquis d'Argenson's papers preserved in the Library of the Louvre. Parts of them are missing altogether.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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